No. 716 SEPT. 17, 1910 5 CENTS

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

THE GHOST OF BARE-FACED JIMMY

A mysterious figure, clad in a pink dressing gown and with its face entirely concealed by a motor veil, was stealthily fleeing down the dark passageway toward the door.

Leon Washburn

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

Issued Weekly. By subscription $2.50 per year. Entered as Second-class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., N. Y.*
Copyright, 1910, by STREET & SMITH.
No. 716. NEW YORK, September 17, 1910. Price Five Cents.

THE GHOST OF BARE-FACED JIMMY;

Leon Washburn

OR,

Nick Carter Meets With Defiance.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

BACK FROM THE DEAD.

"It was four years ago, wasn't it, Chick, when Bare-Faced Jimmy kept us guessing? You remember Jimmy Duryea, don't you?" asked Nick Carter of his first assistant, as he lighted a cigar immediately after breakfast, one Monday morning.

"Remember him? I should say I do!" replied Chick, as he selected a cigar from the box on the table. "Bare-Faced Jimmy! The mere mention of that name, Nick, calls up a great many recollections. And that reminds me; I wonder what has become of Nan Nightengale. I have not seen a line about her in any of the papers lately. Has she left the stage?"

"I saw her last evening, at church or, rather, just as we were coming out of church," replied the detective. "That was why I asked the question."

"You saw Nan?"

"Yes; and talked with her."

"And her husband—Smathers was his name, wasn't it—did you see him, too?"

"No. Smathers—The Man of Many Faces, as he called himself on the vaudeville stage—is dead. He died about a year and a half ago, Nan told me. Jimmy Duryea was her first husband, you know. She got a divorce from him when he was sent to prison, and afterward married Smathers. Smathers has been dead more than a year, and Nan thinks that Jimmy is still alive."

"Jimmy Duryea alive? Impossible."

"That is what I told her; but she insists that she saw him—or his ghost."

"Then it must have been his ghost, Nick. Jimmy has been dead four years. He died soon after you took him off that island in the Sound, near South Norwalk, didn't he?"

"That was the supposition. That has always been my belief. Do you remember that last stunt of his, Chick?"

"The time he passed himself off as Paran Maxwell, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"I think we all have cause to remember that incident. Bare-Faced Jimmy was a remarkable chap, Nick, take it all in all."

"He certainly was. There was a great deal of good

in Jimmy. You remember there was a time when I thought he had entirely reformed. Then he made that disappearing act of his from the steamship, and bobbed up, long afterward, on that island. It would be strange if he should appear again, after four years, wouldn't it?"

"It certainly would; but stranger things than that have happened in our experiences, Nick."

"Yes. But, somehow, I can't believe that Jimmy Duryea is alive, now; although Nan is positive about it."

"Tell me what she said. Tell me about your talk with her. I always liked Nan; and it is a cinch that she *could* sing. You gave her the right name when you called her Nightengale."

"Yes. Even Pettis said that."

"Why did she give up the stage?"

"She didn't tell me that. I was coming out of the church when some one touched me on the arm, and turning about I saw that it was Nan. Of course I was glad to see her, and I said so."

"Naturally. She is a sort of protégée of yours, you know. It was through you, Nick, that she quit being a crook and became an honest woman."

"Softly, Chick. Nan was never really a crook, you know. When she was Jimmy Duryea's wife he did force her into assisting him in some of his crooked work; but she never had any heart in it. She hasn't left the stage permanently—only temporarily. She said she desired a rest for a season, and that she had saved up enough money to take it. I guess that is her only reason for not being on the boards at present."

"But what about Jimmy?"

"It is rather an odd sort of story, but I will tell it to you just as she told it to me and see what you think about it, Chick."

"All right."

"During her career on the stage these last four years, Nan has made some splendid acquaintances. I am not referring to people in the 'profession' so much as to society people. Nan has become a welcome guest at many an exclusive house, and among the members of the most conservative set."

"I'm not surprised at that. She is a beautiful woman—there is not another one on the stage who can hold a candle to her, if it comes down to that."

"You're right. She is a lady, through and through—to the manner born, so to speak."

"Sure. And by the way, isn't that what Jimmy used to say to himself—that he was 'born, bred, and raised a gentleman'?"

"Yes. And it was true, too."

"Go ahead about Nan, Nick."

"Well, it was at the solicitation of some of her society friends that she decided to take a rest for one season. She has saved up a lot of money, as nearly as I can make out, and was invited on a yachting cruise with some of her friends. After that she became the guest of Mrs. Theodore Remsen—and that is where she is staying now."

"She did get into the 'upper ten,' didn't she?"

"Sure. There isn't a more exclusive house in the city, or at Newport or Lenox, than the Theodore Remsen's."

"I know. Well?"

"Perhaps you know that the Remsens also own a fine residence that fronts on the Hudson River, eh? Not far from Fishkill?"

"I didn't know it; but that makes no difference. What about it?"

"That is where they are staying just now; and Nan is there with them. She is to be their guest until spring. I believe there is a whole season of pleasure mapped out for Nan, and she is to be made quite the lioness—and all that."

"I understand. But what has all that got to do with——"

"I am coming to that, Chick. That is what brings me to the rather remarkable tale that Nan told me."

"I see."

"To let you in on the ground floor of the story at once, a burglar got into the house up the river, a few nights ago. Nan surprised the burglar at work, made him give up his booty, agreed to say nothing about it to the members of the household, and let him go. But, it appears, that instead of relinquishing his booty and going away empty handed, he only gave up what was in sight, and actually got away with a diamond necklace and some other jewels that belonged to Mrs. Remsen, and to some of her guests. Nan says that what was actually stolen represented close to forty thousand dollars."

"Jimmy always was discriminating, when it came to a selection of jewels," said Chick, with a slow smile.

"Right again. But because of the disappearance of those jewels, Nan finds herself in a perplexity. Now, I'll tell you the story just as it is."

"All right."

"It happened last Thursday night. Nan had not been feeling up to the mark that day. She had kept herself rather to herself, since morning. During the day Mrs. Remsen told Nan that she was expecting another

guest that evening—a gentleman from the South, named Dinwiddie; Ledger Dinwiddie, to be exact."

"Rather a high-sounding title, that; eh?"

"Yes. Well, Nan didn't go down to dinner that evening, so she did not meet the guest, when he arrived. She retired early—that is, she arranged herself in comfortable attire, and kept to her own room, where she passed the time in reading. About eleven o'clock, she tried to compose herself to sleep, but after an hour of vain effort in that line, she decided that it was of no use, and sought another book. There did not happen to be one handy which interested her, and so, garbed in a wrapper, she descended the stairs to the library."

"It sounds like a chapter out of a book, Nick.'

"It does, for a fact; but you haven't got the real thing, yet."

"Go ahead, then."

"She had bed slippers on her feet, which made no sound as she walked. She crossed the lower hall, after descending the stairs, and stepped into the library, reaching around the jamb of the doorway, as she did so, to switch on the electric lights—and she did it so quickly that she failed to notice that there was a single light already burning in the room."

"More and more like a novel, Nick."

"Yes. When she snapped on the lights, a man who had been seated at the table in the middle of the room sprang to his feet—and she found herself looking into the muzzle of a revolver."

"Well, it wasn't the first time that Nan has done that. It might have scared most women half to death; but Nan——"

"I rather think that she was more surprised and startled by the appearance of the man himself than by the weapon he held in his hand," said the detective, interrupting. "The man was Jimmy Duryea; Bare-Faced Jimmy; at least she says it was—and is."

"And—*is?*"

"Yes. I'm coming to that."

"All right."

"The room was, of course, in a blaze of light. In the man who confronted her, Nan saw the face and features of Jimmy Duryea. On the table where he had been seated was a confused heap of the spoil he had stolen, and was engaged in sorting when Nan interrupted him."

"And she was looking into the muzzle of a gun," commented Chick.

"Yes. But it wasn't that which startled her. It was the face and appearance of the man; of a man whom she supposed to have been dead four years, at least; of the man whom she had once married, and whom she had tenderly loved, until she discovered that he was a crook, when she deserted him and got a divorce."

"What did she do?"

"What would nine out of ten women do, under like circumstances?" retorted the detective.

"Let out a yell, I suppose."

"Nan cried out his name. 'Jimmy!' she exclaimed; and he dropped the gun to the floor, and called back, 'Nan!'"

"Tableau!" said Chick.

"Precisely," said Nick Carter.

CHAPTER II.

JIMMY DURYEA'S DARING.

Chick chuckled softly to himself as he imagined the scene in the library that Nick Carter had just described to him.

"Hold on a minute, Nick," he said. "Let me get the chronology of those two straight in my mind. Jimmy, according to his own story, told to us four years ago, was, originally, a born aristocrat, the second or third son of somebody-or-other, wasn't he?"

"Yes. He would never tell who he was; but it is certain that he is well born."

"So was Nan; and both were English, eh?"

"Yes."

"Scapegrace Jimmy went to South Africa to finish the sewing of his wild oats, and Nan went there as governess to the children of the South African consul. They met there, and were married. Jimmy was a burglar and a thief, and Nan didn't suspect it until long after the two had come to this country. Then she found it out, and for a time he compelled her to assist him in his crooked work. Then he got caught, and was sent away, to Sing Sing, and Nan got a divorce. Later, she married Smathers, the man of many faces, and an actor. Then Jimmy got out of prison, thought Nan had peached on him, threatened vengeance, and all that, and intended to kill her, until it happened that you showed him that Nan was not the one who had betrayed him. She wanted to reform, and did so, and Jimmy agreed to let her alone. Then Jimmy played the Maxwell game,* got caught, was sent back to England to answer charges against him there, escaped, returned here, and supposedly died on an island in Long Island

Sound. That was four years ago. Almost two years ago, Smathers died—I suppose he is really dead, isn't he?"

"Oh, yes, there is no doubt of that, Chick."

"And now Nan discovers her former husband, robbing a house where she is a respected guest, and——"

"And that isn't all of it; not by a long shot."

"Go ahead, then."

"Well, it was a tableau for a moment, after the mutual discovery in that library. There was a half mask on the table, which Jimmy had removed while he was sorting the spoil. He always was a cool proposition, you remember."

"Yes. That is how he got his name of Bare-Faced Jimmy."

"He didn't lose his presence of mind, just then, either. He stooped and picked up the gun from the floor, dropped it into one of his pockets—and sat down again upon the chair where he had been seated when she interrupted him."

"Just like him."

"The rest of the story I will tell just as Nan told it to me."

"All right."

"She said: 'For a moment I didn't know what to do. Until that instant it had never occurred to me that Jimmy was alive. I had not a doubt that he was dead. But there he was, as natural as ever, as handsome as ever, as cool and self-contained as ever, and just as daring as he used to be in the old days.

" 'Sit down, Nan,' he said to her; and she sat down.

" 'I thought you were dead,' she told him, and he laughed in his pleasant way, and replied that he was as good as an army of dead men. Then she pointed at the jewels on the table, and at the other things that he had gotten together.

" 'At your old tricks?' she asked him, and he nodded.

" 'Can't keep away from it, Nan,' he told her. 'It is in my blood, I guess. But what are you doing here? Are you up to the old game, too?'

"Then she told him all about herself, and they talked together for quite a while. The upshot of it was that Jimmy agreed to take the risk of returning all the things to the rooms from which he had taken them, and she promised to wait where she was, until he had done so."

"That was like Jimmy. Think of the nerve of the fellow, in going back to the rooms he had robbed, to return the jewels to the places where he had found them."

"That is just the point, Chick; he didn't."

"Oh; I see."

"He replaced a few of the things, but many of them he still kept. He told her, when he came back, that he had returned them, and it wasn't till the following day that she discovered his deception."

"I think it is rather remarkable that she trusted him to do it at all."

"Jimmy could always make Nan believe that the moon was made of green cheese. Well, she promised him that she would say nothing of having found a man in the library, and much less would she mention to any living person who that man really was. So they parted. Nan returned to her room, and retired. Jimmy, presumably, left the house by the way he had entered

"But he didn't do that, either, eh?"

"No. He didn't do that, either."

"What did he do?"

"He sat opposite Nan, at the breakfast table, the following morning, and was introduced to her by their hostess as Mr. Ledger Dinwiddie."

"Gee!"

"That's what I said."

"Say, Nick, if I had heard this story without names being mentioned, I'd have said that Jimmy Duryea would have done that very thing if he were alive."

"So would I."

'What did Nan do, when the introduction took place?"

"What could she do? Nothing more than acknowledge the introduction. She couldn't tell the story of what had happened during the night, with much more credit to herself, than he could have done so; and, besides, just then she supposed that all the stolen property had been returned. It wasn't till later in the day—some time in the afternoon—that she knew the truth."

"And then?"

"Then she laid for Jimmy. But he knew that, and avoided her, of course. Finally, she went directly to him, and asked him to walk with her to the stables, and he couldn't very well refuse to do that. Halfway to the stables, they found a secluded spot, and there she stopped him and told him that unless he returned all the stolen property before the following morning, she would denounce him, no matter what might happen to her."

"And he made another promise, I suppose?"

"Sure."

*See Nos. 507 and 508, NICK CARTER WEEKLY, for history of Bare-faced Jimmy Duryea.

"And kept it in about the same manner?"

"In precisely the same manner."

"That brings the time to Saturday morning, doesn't it? The thing happened Thursday night."

"Yes."

"What then?"

"Saturday, she went for him again. He told her that there had been no opportunity to replace the stolen jewels the preceding night, but that he would do it that night—Saturday night. Yesterday morning she did not see him at all, but she learned that the jewels had not been returned. Mrs. Remsen asked her to take a motor ride, and she had to go. They came to the city, and decided to remain till to-day—and that is how Nan happened to be at church last night, when I met her."

"She was alone last night? Mrs. Remsen wasn't with her?"

"No; she was alone. Nan had been chewing on the thing all day. She didn't know what to do. She said that she had decided to telephone to me, after church, when she discovered that I was among the members of the congregation."

"In the meantime I suppose she hasn't said a word to anybody but you."

"Not a word."

"What have you advised her to do?"

"I haven't advised her—yet. What I did do was to promise to become one of the invited guests at 'The Birches,' as they call the Remsen place on the Hudson."

"I see. So you are going up there, eh?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"In a couple of hours. I'm going to take the car, and drive there—and you are going with me. Danny will do the driving."

"Oho! I see! Do you know the Remsens?"

"No. I never met either of them; or any of the family; but Nan said she could fix that part of it all right. Nan was to tell Mrs. Remsen, this morning, that she met an old friend at church, who is to motor out their way to-day, and that she invited him to stop at The Birches. That is all there is to that."

"You intend to get Jimmy off to one side, and—what?"

"I haven't decided that point, as yet. You see, there is another complication in the affair. Mrs. Remsen is Theodore Remsen's second wife. There are two stepchildren at The Birches, a son and a daughter—and Ledger Dinwiddie is supposed to be the future husband of Lenore Remsen. You see, Jimmy Duryea has an assured position at the house, and in the family. He thinks, now, that Nan dare not denounce him, because of the effect that such a denouncement would have upon herself; but with me on the ground——"

"I see. What do you propose to do?"

"I don't know, Chick, until I get on the ground. It is a queer case all around. Nan is for compelling Jimmy to give up the plunder, and to disappear, without doing anything to him at all. She believes that I am the only person who can accomplish that with him—and, under the circumstances, she is about right, Chick."

"Yes."

"So I promised her that I would go there this afternoon. She and Mrs. Remsen—who is a beautiful woman of about Nan's age—were to return this morning; they are probably halfway there by this time."

"And you want me with you."

"Why, yes. I thought you'd like it. Jimmy will realize what he is up against when he sees both of us there."

"He certainly ought to."

"I don't know just what attitude Jimmy will take. You know as well as I do that he never plans a thing of this sort without doing it thoroughly. He is doubtless prepared at every turn, and he may have the bareface to defy me."

"It wouldn't surprise me if he did."

"Nor me, either, Chick."

"Then what?"

"Oh, we won't cross any bridges till we get to them."

"How soon will we start, Nick?"

"In an hour or two."

CHAPTER III.

THROWING THE GAUNTLET.

"The Birches," one of the summer residences of Theodore Remsen, multimillionaire, financier, Wall Street wizard, and one of the recognized powers in the moneyed world, stood, and still stands, a prominent landmark at the location already described.

It stands upon a high bluff overlooking the Hudson, and is approached from the main highway by a winding, macadamized road, which, from the lodge gate to the mansion, is more than a mile in length, and shaded on either side by a double row of white birches; hence its name.

The lawn, directly in front of the house, is laid out in tennis courts, and there Nick Carter and Chick

discovered nearly all the guests of the house assembled, when they drove beneath the porte-cochère at four o'clock that Monday afternoon.

Nancy Nightengale had evidently been watching for their arrival, for as Nick stepped down from the car and gave Danny a few directions, he saw her approaching. He went forward to meet her, followed by Chick.

As the detective moved toward her he cast his eyes rapidly over the assembled people—there was a score of them, all told—and thought he saw Jimmy Duryea among them, engaged in an animated conversation with a group of which he appeared to be the centre. But the man's back was turned, and Nick could not be certain.

Nan, in an outing gown and coat of white flannel, with her black hair and sparkling eyes, looked more beautiful than ever as she approached the two detectives, and her smile of greeting was warmth itself.

She conducted them directly toward the place where Mrs. Remsen was seated, and presented them. She added, after she had done so:

"I told Mrs. Remsen that I had invited you to stop here to call upon us, and now she insists that you shall join our party for as long a time as you can remain."

After that, with Nan on his arm, Nick passed from group to group on the lawn, acknowledging introductions here and there as he went along. Chick remained with the group that had formed around the hostess.

Presently Nick and his companion approached that particular group of which the man who called himself Ledger Dinwiddie, and whom Nan believed to be Jimmy Duryea, formed one part.

Nan purposely left the introduction to him, for the last of that particular group; and then she said:

"Mr. Dinwiddie, this is an old friend of mine—Mr. Carter;" and Duryea turned about lazily, as if he had not noticed the arrival of a stranger till that moment.

"Glad to know you, Mr. Carter," he said imperturbably, and with just the faintest trace of a smile on his handsome features; and then he turned back again to the companion with whom he had been talking, and who happened to be the daughter of the house, Miss Lenore Remsen, who was not more than two years younger than her beautiful stepmother.

There was not the slightest trace of recognition in the eyes of Jimmy Duryea when he acknowledged that introduction, although he must have known Nick Carter at once—and he could not have prepared for the sudden appearance of the detective there, unless he had guessed that Nan might communicate with the detective while she was in the city.

Nick was equally reticent. It was no part of his present purpose to force matters; at least he did not intend to do so until the proper moment should arrive; but he did desire to get the gentleman cracksman into conversation, to see how far the assurance of the man would carry him.

Presently he found an opportunity.

It was when Duryea turned to make some general remark to those near him, and Nick chose to reply directly to it.

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Dinwiddie," he said. "Stolen jewels are difficult things to trace. That is the subject you were discussing, I believe?"

"Yes," said Nan, before Duryea could reply. "A most remarkable thing happened here, during the night of last Thursday. A necklace, and other jewels, disappeared most mysteriously from the rooms of the owners. But—shhh—we have all agreed to keep very still about it, for the present."

Duryea laughed softly.

"Perhaps, Miss Nightengale," he said, "this gentleman will be able to make some valuable suggestions in regard to those missing jewels. He has a namesake in New York who is said to be one of the smartest of living detectives. Isn't that so, Carter? Eh?"

"Quite so," replied Nick, looking him directly in the eye. "Only the gentleman to whom you refer is not a namesake. I happen to be the person mentioned myself."

Duryea's brows went upward in well-feigned surprise; a chorus of exclamations arose from every side; Nan bit her lips, for she had not intended that Nick should announce himself quite in that manner.

Lenore Remsen turned at once to the detective, and exclaimed:

"Really, Mr. Carter, are you the detective?"

"Yes, Miss Remsen, I really am."

"Oh, I am so glad. Then you can assist us to recover our jewels."

"I can try, if it is your wish that I should do so," replied Nick calmly. "Were you a victim of the robberies, Miss Remsen?"

"Yes, indeed. It was my diamond necklace that was the most valuable thing taken. I must admit that I was very careless about it that night. Instead of putting it away, as usual, I merely dropped it into my jewel box. In the morning it was gone. Don't you think, Mr. Carter, that it is remarkable how a burglar could get into the house, and go through the rooms as that one did, without leaving a trace of any sort behind him?"

"It does seem so; yes."

"There wasn't a trace. Not one; anywhere."

"Was no one in the house suspected?" asked Nick quietly.

"No one in the——Oh, you mean one of the servants, of course. No; really. The staff of servants that we have in this house are, all of them, old retainers; every one of them has been a long time with us. You know this is the one place which we really call home. We always speak of 'coming home,' when we come here. Oh, no, indeed, we could not suspect one of the servants."

"What is your opinion on the subject, Mr. Dinwiddie?" asked the detective, turning fairly toward Duryea.

The latter smiled, showing his white and even teeth; he twirled his mustache for a moment before he replied, and when he did so it was with deliberation.

"Really," he said, "you know I am not an authority, Mr. Carter—such as yourself, for example. Still—er—I think I have an opinion, nevertheless. We are all apt to form opinions in such cases, don't you think, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes. What is yours? You interest me."

"Do I? Really! You confess yourself to be the great and only Nick Carter, and then do me the honor to care for my opinion!"

"In the hope that it might prove to be an expert one—yes," replied the detective.

"Expert? Oh, dear, no; not at all expert. Just an opinion."

"Well, what is it?"

"I shall shock all the ladies present—and some who are not immediately present in this group—when I mention it."

"Nevertheless——"

"Oh, nevertheless, I shall not hesitate—even at the risk of giving offense. I should venture it as my opinion that the thief in this instance is a woman, whether she happens to be a servant—or one of the guests. There! Have I shocked all of you?"

He laughed easily when he asked the question, as if to take away the sting of it, and he turned his speaking eyes from one to another of the group until he had gone the rounds—and, somehow, he managed to create the impression that he was merely indulging in a joke at their expense.

But there was an uneasy laugh around him, nevertheless.

Lenore Remsen started to her feet, and exclaimed:

"I think that was horrid of you, Ledger! Horrid! The idea of saying such a thing! We shall all be looking askance at each other, from now on. What do you think about it, Miss Nightengale?"

"I should sooner incline to the opinion that the thief was a man, and a guest," was the deliberate reply; and she added, not without intent, for she was angry, seeing exactly what Duryea had intended to convey to her: "One of the lately arrived guests, at that."

Lenore clapped her hands.

"That is where you get it back, Ledger," she exclaimed. "But, really, that was horrid of you, to say such a thing."

"Who are the lately arrived guests, Miss Nightengale?" asked the detective, without turning his head; and she replied, without hesitation:

"Mr. Dinwiddie is himself the most lately arrived one."

Duryea laughed aloud.

"Good!" he said. "That is right, too. I arrived that very evening. Now, I wonder if it could have been me? I used to walk in my sleep when I was a child, although I don't remember that I had the habit of purloining necklaces when I did so. But, then, one never can tell."

"Indeed one cannot," retorted Nan. And then, assuming the air of one who was joking, she added: "I should advise a close inspection into your past record, Mr. Dinwiddie, if it is true that you formerly were in the habit of prowling about houses in the night."

"Gladly!" he exclaimed, joining in the general laugh that followed. "Will you give us the benefit of searching yours, also, Miss Nightengale?"

A slow flush stole into the cheeks and brow of Nan Nightengale, but she was equal to the occasion. She replied:

"It will not be necessary that you should search. Fortunately there is one who has known me many years. Mr. Carter can supply all particulars that may be required."

"I am afraid," said Duryea, "that what was intended as a joke all around has taken a serious turn. Let us drop it before we begin to indulge in personalities. Nevertheless, Miss Nightengale, it is well to have a person so renowned as Nick Carter to vouch for one. I only wish that he could perform the same service for me."

"Perhaps, Mr. Dinwiddie, I might be able to do that, also," replied Nick quietly. "It is my profession to know something about a great many people who do not suppose that I know them at all. However,

as you say, the conversation is taking too serious a turn. I will propose a game of tennis with you, Mr. Dinwiddie; what do you say?"

"Gladly. Come along. Singles?"

"Yes. Singles. There is a vacant court."

"All right. You're on. But I warn you, Mr. Carter, I am considered an expert."

"So much the better. I think I just suggested that about you in quite another line, did I not?"

CHAPTER IV.

THE GHOST OF BARE-FACED JIMMY.

The game of tennis was over.

There were indications of a shower, and the spectators had scampered toward the wide verandas for shelter, so that Nick Carter and the so-called Ledger Dinwiddie stood alone near one end of the net. It was the opportunity which Nick wanted.

"Well, Jimmy, this is a bolder game than usual, that you are playing, isn't it?" he asked smilingly.

Duryea raised his eyes to the detective's without a trace of resentment in them, and also without a vestige of surprise visible. He also raised his brows interrogatively.

"Now, I wonder where in the world you hit upon that name?" he said, in reply, and his expression denoted nothing more nor less than wonderment. "That is what my dear old dad used to call me, Jimmy! James Ledger Dinwiddie is my full name. How'd you hit upon the Jimmy part of it?"

"Oh, come, Jimmy, don't try to play it out with me. You know it won't work. You are Jimmy Duryea, all right—and the climate of The Birches isn't good for you, just now."

"What the blazes do you mean?" was the indignant ejaculation; and then: "I say, we'll get caught in that shower, old chap. Come along!"

He seized his racket from the ground and started toward the house; but he had not taken two steps before Nick Carter seized him by the arm and propelled him toward a summerhouse that was near at hand.

"This place will shelter us, Jimmy," he said coldly. "You come along with me. If you attempt to resist, I shall take you there anyhow, so if you don't want a scene here on the lawn, come."

"This is a high-handed——" began Duryea; but the detective interrupted him.

"It'll be higher-handed if you don't do as I say," he remarked; and then the big, advance raindrops began to fall, and they ran together beneath the shelter of the summerhouse.

"Now, what the deuce——"

"Drop it, Jimmy. If you don't, I'll put the handcuffs on you now, and take you away with me through this storm. You know that I can do it."

Bare-Faced Jimmy shrugged his shoulders. Then he laughed. He dropped his lithe and graceful length upon one of the rustic settees, thrust his hands deeply into his pockets, and replied:

"Well, speak your piece, Mr. Carter, since you seem bound to do so. I can listen, and the storm prevents my leaving you. Besides, there is no one to hear us."

"No; there isn't any one to overhear us. That is why I pulled you into this place."

"Extremely kind and thoughtful of you, I'm sure; only, you'd have done better if you had not ventured to thrust yourself upon me at all, wouldn't you? What the blazes is the matter with you, anyway?"

"Drop it, I say, Jimmy."

"Gladly—if you'll tell me what it is that you want me to drop," was the cool reply. He removed his hands from his pockets long enough to abstract a cigarette case from another one, and to light a cigarette. "Have one? No? Too bad. They're Russian."

"Drop the play acting with me, Jimmy."

"Say, look here, mister man, it was all right for you to make a play with that name that my dad used to call me—at first; but it's getting tiresome," exclaimed Duryea, with a fine show of rancour. "I'm Jimmy, all right, only nobody calls me by that name now. I'm Mr. Dinwiddie, particularly to strangers, if you don't mind. I'll thank you to address me by that name. What kind of a game are you up to, anyway? Blackmail?"

The effrontery of the man was phenomenal.

Instead of being offended by it, Nick Carter was amused; and he could not resist a small sense of admiration, too, for Duryea's pluck, under the circumstances. He resolved to meet him on the ground he had selected.

"All right, Mr. Dinwiddie," he said, smiling. "It is my wish to discuss a certain person whom we both knew in the past. If you prefer to speak of that person in the third person, I see no reason for not humoring you. But, before we continue with the subject, I wish to warn you that I am about through with your pose. I will talk in the third person about that other man, but you've got to talk—or something will happen."

"How melodramatic. Look here, Carter, what are you driving at?"

"I'm driving at one Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea."

"Oh; you are! And who might he be? Or who might he have been? Is he a dead one, or is he alive, Mr. Carter? You interest me. Really, you do."

"He has long since been supposed to be dead, but just now he seems to be very much alive."

"That's where you are dead wrong, Carter. Believe me, you are. Dead men do not return. Neither do they discuss tales of themselves. Bare-Faced Jimmy, eh? What a name!"

"It was never more appropriate than at this moment, Jimmy, for if you are not the most barefaced reprobate out of prison, I'll eat my hat; and that's quite a compliment."

"I suppose so. Anyway, I choose to take it so, rather than be offended. But you said he was supposed to be dead—this Bare-Faced Jimmy, as you call him. Why not let him lie? What is the use of stirring up the dead?"

"He has been stealing jewels, that's all."

"Oh; has he?"

"Yes. He can stay dead just as long as he pleases if he returns those jewels, and then disappears again, at once."

"I see. It must be his ghost that you are talking about, Carter."

"Yes; we'll call it that. The ghost of Bare-Faced Jimmy."

"What has he got to do besides return the jewels he has stolen?"

"Beat it. Skip. Get out. Disappear."

"What! All four, and all at once? Really. Say! Suppose the ghost refuses to walk?"

"He won't refuse when he realizes just what he is up against."

"Won't he? Maybe you wrong him there. Perhaps you do not do this ghost full justice."

"Perhaps not; but I think I do."

"Say, Carter, honest, did you ever hear of a ghost that got caught? A real ghost?"

"I don't think I ever did."

"Well, you don't hear of this one's getting caught, either. If the ghost of Jimmy Duryea stole the jewels you are talking about, the ghost of Jimmy Duryea intends to keep them, and it will go hard with the man or woman—or shall I say the man and woman—who attempts to deprive the ghost of them."

Nick Carter's reply was a smile.

"There aren't any witnesses to this conversation, Carter," Duryea went on, "so I don't mind being more or less plain with you for just a moment."

"I am glad that you have arrived at that conclusion, Jimmy."

"I'll tell you this: If anybody has got to 'drop it,' as you suggested just now, you are the one to do it. You have bitten off more than you can chew. You just now said that Mr. James Duryea is dead. Let him lie. Mr. Ledger Dinwiddie stands before you, and Mr. Ledger Dinwiddie can prove his descent for generations back, and that without the slightest trouble. If Jimmy Duryea's ghost walks, Nick Carter won't be the man to lay it. You can bet your last dollar on that."

"All the same, I think he will; and to prove it to you, I'll just clap the irons upon you right now, Jimmy, and as soon as this storm is past I'll take you where you belong."

As the detective spoke he produced a pair of handcuffs from one of his pockets, and he held them, jingling before Duryea's eyes, looking straight at the man.

But Duryea only laughed.

"Put 'em away, Carter," he said. "You won't use them; not on me; not to-day, at least."

"Why not?"

"Because you won't. That's reason enough. What do you think would happen, if you should be ass enough to do what you threaten?"

"I think it would be Sing Sing for yours, Jimmy."

"Not on your life; not much."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I'll admit, for the sake of argument, that you may have enough against the aforesaid James Duryea to send him up for the rest of his life; but—you know the old receipt for roasting a hare, don't you?"

"Well?"

"First catch your hare, Carter. In this case, first catch the man—or shall I say the ghost?"

"Say what you please; it does not alter the circumstance."

"Doesn't it? You would find that it did. Admitting that the ghost of Jimmy Duryea is now standing before you, you have already agreed that a ghost was never caught. Do you suppose—you who claim to know me—that I would be fool enough, if I were the man you believe me to be, to stand here and defy you unless I knew exactly what I was doing?"

"You've got cheek enough to do almost anything, Jimmy."

"Yes, and I have got brains enough to have prepared for all the emergencies that might arise, too. I

asked you a moment ago if you realized what would happen if you should clap those irons onto me and take me away. You haven't replied to that question, yet."

"You answer it, then."

"You would make a charge against me—as James Duryea. I would establish the fact that I am not James Duryea. All the pictures in the world, no matter whether they are in a rogues' gallery or not, would have any effect upon the proof that I would be able to offer. I have a long line of ancestry to fall back upon. Ledger Dinwiddie is a personality, widely known in a certain locality where his home is—now. Jimmy Duryea is dead, and buried, and his bones can be dug up, if necessary. Nick Carter, the great detective, would make himself the laughingstock of the whole country."

"Nick Carter isn't a bit afraid of doing that, Jimmy."

"And then, again, you heard my opinion—the one I gave out there on the lawn—about the personality of the thief who stole the jewels. I need only suggest to you that if you should enter that house now, and make a search, you might find the jewels, and you might not; but if you did find them, you would find that everything would point to the identity of the thief as I named it out there."

"You scoundrel! Do you mean to say——"

"I mean what I have said—no more, no less. You cannot crush me, Carter; you haven't got it in your power to do so, just now. I would rise, like a phœnix from the ashes, and laugh at you."

"You think so."

"No; I know so. I know exactly how thoroughly I have builded this edifice in which I am now living. And so, Mr. Nicholas Carter, the ghost of Bare-Faced Jimmy defies you!"

He stopped and then laughed mockingly.

CHAPTER V.

NICK CARTER MEETS WITH DEFIANCE.

It might occur to the reader to ask: Why did not Nick Carter seize upon his man then and there, put the irons on him, and take him away? The answer is obvious.

The detective knew the man with whom he had to deal, too well.

He realized that Jimmy Duryea would never have placed himself in the present position unless he had been very sure of his ground.

There was no doubt in Nick's mind that when Jimmy found that Nan had gone to the city, he suspected at once that she would notify Nick Carter of all that had happened at The Birches. The fact that Jimmy had awaited with calmness the arrival of the detective upon the scene was sufficient proof that the former burglar was fairly positive of the ground upon which he stood.

Jimmy denied his identity while admitting it—by implication.

He called himself the ghost of Bare-Faced Jimmy with an irony that was inimitable.

He had stated that Ledger Dinwiddie, the man whom he claimed to be, could establish his identity, with a long line of ancestry, without a doubt, and with very little trouble; and he had asserted that the bones of Jimmy Duryea might be dug up, if necessary, to prove that Jimmy Duryea was really dead.

There is just where the rub came. Jimmy might be bluffing, but again he might be entirely in earnest. Jimmy was a careful one in preparing his coups, and there could be no doubt that he had prepared this one from every available standpoint.

And again, until that meeting with Nan, at the church, Nick Carter himself had believed that Duryea was long since dead and buried.

Nevertheless, Nick Carter was not one to be driven aside from a determination upon which he had studied and decided; and he had decided that this was Jimmy Duryea, and that he must not only give up the stolen property, but must also disappear. If the detective at times appeared to hesitate, it was only because he wished to make himself more sure of his own ground.

"Jimmy," he said, after a short pause which followed the burglar's last remark, which was in the nature of a defiance, "you can't bluff me, and you know you can't."

"That is precisely why I am not attempting to do so," was the quick retort. "You will find, if you persevere far enough, that this is no bluff. I'm in dead earnest. Jimmy Duryea is dead, buried, and gone; Ledger Dinwiddie is very much alive, and is here on the spot, ready to do business. Ledger Dinwiddie owns estates in the South, heavily mortgaged, to be sure; but his, nevertheless. He can prove who he is, and every statement he makes about himself. If you should place me under arrest, you would cause me great inconvenience, to be sure; but you would cause others more

than you would me—yourself among the number. Now, you can take that, or leave it."

"You are covertly making a threat against Nan Nightengale."

"I am not covertly threatening anybody; but I openly threaten every person, no matter who it is, who attempts to connect me with the former Jimmy Duryea. Now you've got it, straight from the shoulder."

"Jimmy, I've got three questions to ask you."

"Fire away."

"I won't go into the details of them till I have asked all of them."

"Just as you please. I don't want to hurry you. The storm is almost over, and as soon as it is past I shall deny myself the pleasure of your company, and go to the house."

"We'll see about that—when the storm is over."

"We will see. Now, what are your questions?"

"The first one is this: Will you return those jewels you stole last Thursday night?"

"I have not stolen any jewels, and therefore I cannot return any. Next?"

"Will you, after the jewels are returned to the proper owners, leave this place, and the United States as well, never to return, on condition that I let you go away unmolested?"

"Since I cannot—or will not, if you prefer it so—return the jewels, that last question requires no answer; but I will answer it by saying that I shall remain a guest at this place just so long as it pleases me to do so."

"The third and last question, is this: Will you promise me never to communicate with Lenore Remsen again, after to-day?"

One quick flash of keen resentment crossed the face of Duryea, when that question was asked; but it was gone as quickly as it appeared. He laughed outright, flicking away the stub of a cigarette as he did so, and producing another one.

"Don't be an ass, Carter," he said, rising and turning to cross the summerhouse toward the door through which they could see the people on the veranda of the mansion.

Instantly Nick Carter leaped from the seat he had been occupying, and sprang upon him. He seized him by the arms, pulled his hands behind him, and snapped the handcuffs upon his wrists in that position; and then Nick pulled him away from the door so that there was no chance of being seen from the house.

Beyond the first impulse of resistance, Jimmy made none at all; and when the detective thrust him back again upon the chair where he had been seated before, he looked up with a quiet smile, as if he rather enjoyed the proceeding.

"Jimmy," said Nick, "I'm not going to monkey with you. You are past all that. You have laid your plans, and you think they will work out to the end. But they won't. They might do so with some people, but they won't with me. Now, I offer you your liberty upon those three conditions, and I do it for Nan's sake, not for yours."

"Why don't you marry her, Carter?" was the cool response. "You're a widower, and she is twice a widow. Why don't you marry her? You seem to be mightily stuck on her."

"I am, in the sense that I thoroughly respect a good woman, Jimmy, and Nan is that."

"She was good enough to go to you and give things away up here, when she supposed that she had the kibosh on me," sneered Jimmy.

"She did not come to me and give you away, Jimmy. I met her by accident; and even then it was after you had broken your solemn word given to her that night. What has changed you so, Jimmy? You used to be a man of your word, even though you were a crook."

"I'm not Jimmy, I tell you. Jimmy is dead. Nothing of him remains—unless it is that ghost we have been talking about. Come, Carter, take these irons off me. You can only make trouble for Nan, if I am found in this predicament. She would be the one to suffer; not I."

"You think so."

'I know so, Carter. I know whereof I speak. I don't do things halfway, and you know I do not. I intend to carry off this plan I have laid out, Nick Carter to the contrary, notwithstanding."

"What does that plan include, Jimmy?"

"If I should tell you, you would know."

"Do you mean that you would have married that girl, if fortune had not gone against you in the way it has?"

"I intend to marry her, as it is. I have got a name to perpetuate, Carter; the name of Dinwiddie. There is not an older or a better one in this benighted country of yours."

"Perhaps you will tell me how you came by that name," suggested the detective; and he was surprised when Duryea laughed aloud.

"I'd like to tell you; by Jove, I would, and no mistake, Carter. It is almost too good to keep. But that would be throwing altogether too much information in

your way—and it cannot be done. Look here, Carter, I'll tell you what I'll do."

"Well?"

This was what Nick had been hoping for. He had now got his man to a point where he was tacitly admitting his position, and was doing his share of the talking.

"We'll admit, for the sake of the circumstance, that I am the ghost of Bare-Faced Jimmy, or at least that I represent the ghost. We'll admit that the ghost got the diamonds. We'll admit that the ghost can return them. See?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'll confess to you that I badly need those diamonds, in order to carry out my plans, for I am short of money. Nevertheless, since you make such a point of it, I'll get the ghost to return them to their proper owners—on a condition."

"What is the condition?"

"Wait. Don't go off half cocked."

"What is the condition?"

"I'll return the diamonds, I'll forget, as long as I live, that I ever saw Nan Nightengale in my life—provided you'll go away from here and forget that such a person as Jimmy Duryea ever existed."

For a moment the detective stared at Jimmy; then he laughed shortly.

"Have you so small an opinion of me as that, Duryea?" he asked. "Do you suppose that I would permit a man like you to ruin the life of that girl, as you would do, if she became your wife?"

"I wouldn't ruin it; I would make her happy. I would——"

"That's enough of that. Do you know, I have more than half a notion to call your bluff about your being able to prove yourself to be a Dinwiddie, and take you in right now?"

"Try it on, if you think it will work, Carter."

Nick started to his feet as if he intended to do so. He was more than half inclined to do it, and probably might have done so, had it not been that at that moment he heard voices, as if persons were approaching the summerhouse.

He stepped quickly to the vine-shaded doorway, and looked out.

The storm had passed, and halfway across the lawn from the house, coming toward him, was Lenore Remsen, accompanied by two of the young women guests at the mansion.

Nick realized instantly that this was no time for the dénouement.

One glance, and the thought that accompanied it, satisfied him that the time was not yet ripe, and he wheeled and returned quickly to the side of Duryea.

Then, without a word, he quickly unlocked the manacles and removed them, dropping them into a pocket out of sight.

"Thanks. Thanks, awfully," drawled Duryea, and yawned. "You're really quite a bore, Carter—sometimes."

"People are coming, Jimmy," said Nick, speaking rapidly. "You are free, now, for the moment, but it won't be for long. I am not sparing you, just now; I am sparing that poor girl, whom you are deceiving. But I'll tell you right now, Duryea, that from this moment, no matter what happens, I do not leave your trail until you are behind the bars of a prison, condemned under the name that belongs to you. I'll add that the offer I made a little while ago, to let you escape on conditions, is withdrawn. That's all. You have defied me, Duryea, and you will have to take the consequences. Maybe you know what that means when I say it. If you do not, there are people up at Sing Sing who could tell you."

The first tinge of uneasiness that Duryea had shown, appeared in his face for an instant; and then the summerhouse door was darkened by the young women whom Nick had seen approaching, and he started to his feet with a smile and an exclamation of greeting. A moment later they were all walking together toward the mansion.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN A MAN'S DESPERATE.

During what remained of that day, through the dinner hour, and in the evening when the entire company of guests thronged the big rooms, Nick Carter and Duryea kept as far apart as they conveniently could. Nick had an object in carrying out his part of that unspoken arrangement: He wished Jimmy to understand that he had not yet decided what to do.

It has always been one of the detective's theories that if you leave a criminal well enough alone, he will presently become uneasy under the restraint of inaction, and do something himself. Nick had a notion that Jimmy would attempt some sort of move before another day came around, if only he were left severely to himself; that is, as far as the detective was concerned.

But Nick found an opportunity to make Chick thoroughly acquainted with all that had happened; and he also had it arranged to take Nan in to dinner, and so secured an opportunity to talk with her.

He noticed, while at the dinner table, that Jimmy, who was seated nearly opposite, kept a furtive eye upon him and Nan, and noted that they were whispering together. No doubt the cracksman would think that they were hatching some sort of a plot against him. That was precisely what Nick wished to have him think.

Nick did not believe that Jimmy would have the pluck to hold his ground, and really attempt to marry the girl; for he must know that Nick Carter would never permit that.

No, it was plain to the detective that the bluff on Jimmy's part was directed at some other effort, since that one must now be abandoned.

There was a time after dinner when Nick and Nan found themselves alone together, at a corner of the veranda. Nick was seated upon the rail, and Nan stood beside him, picking apart the leaves of a wilted rose that she held in her hand.

It was the first chance that Nick had had to tell her about what happened in the summerhouse; there had been no opportunity to do so at the dinner table.

"You and Jimmy were a long time in the summerhouse together, during the storm," she said to him, in a low tone. "What happened?"

"A great deal happened, and very little happened," he replied, smiling.

"Tell me about it, Mr. Carter," she asked.

"Jimmy is a great bluffer," replied Nick. "He is also a brave man, for one in his position. To tell you the truth, Nan, if what he says is half the truth, he holds trumps at the present moment. Can you guess what he would do if I were to arrest him now?"

"Deny his identity, of course."

"More than that. He has got another identity established. That name he is wearing is more than a mere name which he has assumed for his present purposes."

"What do you mean by that statement?"

"I mean that somehow he has managed to establish a new identity. I don't know how he has accomplished it, but if I read him correctly, he has practically made himself over into a new being, and established beyond a doubt—that is, a present doubt—that he is that person."

"But how could he do that?"

"I don't know—at the present time; but some day I shall make it my business to look into the matter; after we have got the present predicament off our hands."

"You admit, then, that it is a predicament?"

"Decidedly so."

"Will you tell me in just what way it is a predicament?"

"Jimmy has practically defied me. Out there in the summerhouse I actually put the handcuffs on him, thinking that he might weaken; but not a bit of it. He was as cool as a cucumber. He not only insisted that he could prove the death of Jimmy Duryea, but that he could prove his own identity as Ledger Dinwiddie. He actually dared me to arrest him—and under the circumstances I thought it best not to do so—till later. Nan, where is the room you occupy in this house?"

"I have a suite of three rooms. They are in the south wing. Why?"

"I want to go to them. I want to examine them—thoroughly."

"Why?"

"Because I think that Jimmy has hidden those jewels there."

"What; in my rooms?"

"Yes."

"Why should he do that?"

"Can't you guess?"

"I'm afraid not. I——"

"When he found that you had gone to the city with Mrs. Remsen, his first thought must have been one of panic, for he guessed that you would go straight to me with the story about him. The fact that he remained here, was perfectly cool when I arrived, and thoroughly the master of himself, is proof to anybody who knows Jimmy that he had prepared to strike back, and strike hard, if anything happened after your return."

She nodded, and Nick continued:

"When you returned, nothing happened; but there is no doubt that he expected me, and was not in the least surprised when I appeared on the scene. Do you remember what he said when we were discussing the theft of the jewels?"

"Yes. About a woman having taken them? He meant me, did he not?"

"Surely. I understood it at the time, but he made it more plain, later on, in the summerhouse. He almost openly threatened you, in case anything happened to him."

"With a revelation of my past, do you mean?"

"Worse than that. With accusing you directly with stealing the jewels, and proving it."

"By finding them in my possession? Do you mean that?"

"Yes."

"That is why you would like to search my rooms?"

"Yes."

"Do you really think that he would have taken the risk of hiding them in my rooms?"

"Nan, Jimmy Duryea will stop at nothing to carry his point. He has come here, resolved to marry Theodore Remsen's daughter. He has made that daughter fall in love with him, and he can render himself a most lovable chap, if he has the mind to do so."

"That is only too true, Mr. Carter. Even now I find myself trying to make excuses for him. In the old days, when he made me assist him in his burglaries, and finally when I actually stole things under his direction, there was no resisting him."

"I know."

"But what——"

"Nan, Lenore Remsen will have a dowry of more than a million. This house, with the estate upon which it stands, will go to her. He regards that as a prize worth winning, no matter what the effort. He stole the jewels merely to provide himself with ready cash when the time comes for him to leave here to prepare for the wedding. The wedding itself is the great goal."

"I am aware of that."

"Therefore, when he decided that you had gone to New York to warn me, and possibly to bring me back with you, he realized that he must make his position unassailably strong, or else abandon it altogether."

"But, how——"

"Now, if the worst should come to the worst, he could tell what you used to be—and he knows that you could not and would not deny that. He also knows that you and I, both, will do anything in our power to prevent the necessity of such a revelation."

"Yes," she said.

"So it remains—at least it is apparent to me—that he has found a place inside of your rooms to conceal those stolen jewels; a place where he could find them by accident, or where some other person would find them seemingly by accident, in case a search should be made for them. Where would you be then, Nan?"

She smiled wistfully; and then, with an attempt at playfulness, replied:

"I'd be in a bad fix, wouldn't I?"

"You certainly would."

"But, Mr. Carter, he must know that he cannot carry off that marriage, with you and I both at hand to prevent it. He must know that we would not permit it to take place, no matter what the consequences might be."

"One would think so; but—well, perhaps he intends, somehow, to forestall us."

"Forestall us? How could he do that?"

"Oh, I don't know; only, perhaps, if the marriage had actually taken place, and there was no help for it, you and I might both think that it would be the better way to leave things alone. While we might, and would, prevent such a thing, if we had the time and the opportunity, we might both of us feel disinclined to interfere after it had actually happened."

"I understand what you mean."

"Well, just what do you think I mean?"

"That he was only playing you to gain time, and that he will, if he can do it, induce Lenore to run away with him, and be married. Only there wouldn't be any earthly reason for such a thing as that, when he is already the accepted suitor. No; it isn't that. It is something else, and I think I can guess what it is."

"What, then?"

"Remember, I have been his wife. I have lived with him and I know him, even better than you do."

"Yes."

"A little while ago, you called him a brave man. Well, if physical courage is bravery, then he can certainly lay claim to that quality. James Duryea is not afraid of anything."

"I know it."

"Once he has made up his mind to do a certain thing, he will do that thing, though the heavens fall."

"I understand that quality about him, too."

"It is evident that he has made up his mind to marry Lenore."

"Yes, I think so."

"And the only obstacles that are in his way at the present moment stand right here; they are Nick Carter and Nan Nightengale. Is that correct?"

"Admitted—if you put aside a small one that I see at the other end of the veranda, who is called Chick."

"True; I had forgotten Chick. But that does not alter what I was about to say."

"What was that?"

"In the past, whenever obstacles got in the way of Jimmy's designs, he broke them down, put them aside, or destroyed them. That is what he will attempt to do now."

"Nan, my dear girl, do you mean murder?"

"Yes. That is just what I do mean. He would not hesitate."

"Perhaps not, if there were opportunity. But here there is none."

"Then he will make one. I am afraid, Nick Carter! I am afraid!"

CHAPTER VII.

PLOTTING AGAINST A PLOTTER.

It should be permitted us to look inside the brain of Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea for a moment, in order that we can see just how he was working out the existing situation. It will help us better to understand the events which followed; although, of course, the one who reads must understand that no such privilege could have been afforded the detective at that time.

He had to form his judgments as to what Jimmy might determine to do next, from his past knowledge of the man, and that, he decided wisely, was to his credit.

We cannot relate here just how it happened that Jimmy appeared at the summer residence of Theodore Remsen in the character of a Southerner named Ledger Dinwiddie, and was prepared to establish that character, and the reputation that went with it, to all comers. That is another story.

But that Jimmy Duryea never entered upon any task without having thoroughly prepared himself to meet all the emergencies that might arise has already been made sufficiently clear.

His presence in that house as an accepted suitor for the hand of Lenore Remsen was the result of careful study and preparation, and the step had been taken with due recognition of all the risks that had to be met and overcome.

The encounter with Nan, in that house, and the manner of it, as related by her to Nick Carter, were, of course, unforeseen; they could not have been anticipated.

When Jimmy met Nan that night in the library, while he was sorting over the jewels he had stolen, it came in the nature of a surprise to him. He was absolutely unprepared for it.

Nevertheless, he had met it with his customary aplomb and coolness. We already know the consequences of that encounter.

Jimmy had no intention of keeping his promise to her, when he agreed to return the jewels to their rightful owners; and that was because he really needed the cash that the jewels would supply, rather than any reluctance he felt to keeping his word with her.

In order to carry out his plans to the end, he did really require more money, and a considerable amount at that; else he would never have gone to the extent of robbing the visitors at the house where he was himself a guest; of actually robbing his expected bride of her necklace.

But, so far as that was concerned, he merely argued to himself that it was only anticipating the future. That he was taking only what he had a right to take—or would have a right to take later on.

But, when he did not keep his word, and Nan threatened him with exposure, he came very near being desperate.

He had arrived at that position where this was the last play out of the pack, so to speak. He had thrown aside every other chance he had in his career, for this one effort—to win a position in the world, a bride, and a fortune, all at one cast.

Jimmy Duryea was never a murderer at heart; never had he been cruelly inclined. He would go out of his way to do a kindness to another, if it in no way interfered with his own successes.

But that same characteristic worked to the opposite extreme, as well.

Woe betide the circumstance or the person who stood in the way of his success. He was thoroughly implacable in that respect. So, when that Friday night came, and he had not returned the jewels, and Nan threatened him—and when, the following morning, he discovered that Nan had gone to the city with Mrs. Remsen, causing him to believe that she would seek out Nick Carter and tell him all before her return—he realized that he was "up against it hard," and that he was confronting the struggle of his life.

And so, as Nick Carter had just told Nan, the coming of the detective to the house that Monday afternoon was no surprise to Jimmy Duryea. It was only a confirmation of his expectation.

He had decided, long before Nick Carter appeared, just how he would conduct himself when that incident happened; and we have seen how he did it.

Naturally he could not foresee that interview in the summerhouse; he was not entirely prepared for that; but he met it, when it came, with all the cool effrontery that was a part of him.

If Nick Carter knew and understood Jimmy Duryea, no less did Jimmy Duryea know and understand the detective.

At least he knew that Nick Carter could not be bluffed.

Jimmy's trump card was Nan—and Nan's position was precarious; and Jimmy knew that the detective would stand for Nan, and protect her, just as far as it was possible to do so.

But, after the interview in the summerhouse, Jimmy was thoughtful. He knew that the truce that had been declared when Nick took the irons off his wrists was only a temporary arrangement, and that the detective would lose no time in drawing the coils about the interloper, and so tightly that there would be no way of escape left open.

Jimmy realized that in order to succeed now he must play what remained of the game with supreme boldness—and that he must rely upon his established position in that house to see him through it to the end.

At dinner, as has been said, he watched his two active enemies, covertly, all the time. He gave very little thought to Chick, although he recognized the fact that the assistant was there, prepared to render aid whenever it should become necessary to do so.

After dinner, Jimmy kept his eyes open and his wits on the alert, and he saw Nick and Nan when they withdrew to one corner of the veranda, and entered upon that intimate interview.

What Jimmy would have been willing to sacrifice could he have overheard that conversation need not be estimated upon; and the longer he watched it from a distance, the more anxious he became concerning what it might portend.

When he could stand it no longer, he drew Lenore aside from the group with which she had mingled, and with her on his arm sauntered toward Nick and Nan, arriving at their secluded corner of the veranda just at the moment when Nan had said to Nick:

"I am afraid, Nick Carter! I am afraid!"

Low as the words had been uttered, they were overheard. Jimmy and Lenore both heard them, although they understood them quite differently.

Jimmy believed that he thoroughly comprehended the meaning that was conveyed; Lenore was only puzzled that Nan Nightengale should be afraid of anything, and should give voice to her fears in exactly that tone. As she stopped before them, she exclaimed:

"Afraid, Nan? Of what are you afraid?"

"Of the consequences of her misdeeds, doubtless," interjected Jimmy, before Nan could reply; and he added, with deeper meaning than Lenore could understand: "Fear is a wholesome thing, at times, when it conveys a warning of things that are likely to happen, under given conditions. It leads one to avoid those conditions, eh, Mr. Carter?" and he laughed.

"Unless the fear is entirely misplaced, and unnecessary, Mr. Dinwiddie," replied the detective.

Nick looked across the veranda at that moment, and managed to catch the eyes of Chick, to whom he signaled. A moment later, Chick joined the little party in the corner.

"I'm going to ask you to take my place here for a time, Chick," said the detective. "Mr. Dinwiddie has begun a discourse on the quality of Fear, used as a proper noun, and I will leave it to you to answer him. Pray, do not let him escape, Chick, without having first given a good reason for his last statement."

The detective bowed, and withdrew. Nan laughed aloud. Jimmy Duryea scowled. Lenore, unsuspecting the byplay that was contained in the sentence Nick Carter had just uttered, smiled encouragingly upon Chick.

But by those words Chick and Nan both understood that they were to keep Jimmy Duryea under surveillance for a time at least, while Nick Carter should occupy himself elsewhere; but what was more to the point, Jimmy understood them, also.

Nick Carter stepped aside, and passed into the house through one of the open French windows; then he disappeared.

He had been quite sincere when he had expressed a desire to see the inside of the rooms that Nan occupied, and he wished to see them at once. He believed that no better opportunity could offer than the one already at hand, and so he took advantage of it.

He had only a vague idea of the plan of the house, judging it from the outside view he had been able to obtain of the mansion when he approached it in the automobile, and from the few words that Nan had uttered regarding the location of her rooms.

He passed through the library, into the hall, and up the wide stairway to the second floor, and so found his way, with comparatively no difficulty, to Nan's suite of rooms.

The door was open, and he could see that there was no one inside the room into which he peered; Nan's maid was evidently taking advantage of the evening hour, to gossip with the other servants of the house.

The detective passed inside and closed the door after him. Then he stopped, and began, from that point of vantage immediately inside the closed door, to make a systematic survey of his surroundings.

Nick Carter's method under such circumstances has been too often described to need repetition here. He

stood in that one spot on the floor, and permitted his eyes to travel slowly from floor to ceiling, and back again to floor, carefully covering every inch of space that was before him, with that searching gaze.

There were just three points upon which Nick Carter was certain since that conversation with Jimmy Duryea in the summerhouse; two of them were dependent upon the first one, but Jimmy had as good as stated the first one for a fact.

First, then, Jimmy had hidden those stolen jewels somewhere within the rooms occupied by Nan Nightengale—had hidden them somewhere, so that when discovered, apparently by accident or otherwise, the conclusion would be self-evident that Nan had, herself, hidden them there.

Second, they would necessarily have to be hidden where searchers would come upon them more by accident than by design.

Third, they could not, therefore, be under lock and key, put away in a drawer or a trunk; but must have been placed in some receptacle into which a stranger might peer, quite naturally, to discover them.

Although Nick Carter, during the half hour that he spent inside those rooms, searched every possible place where the jewels might have been hidden, he turned at last toward the door, profitless from the search.

He had peered into every vase, into every possible receptacle that stood in sight, and had found no trace of them—and so much time had elapsed that he did not dare to remain longer away from the other members of the house party.

So he turned toward the door which opened upon the hall, opened it, and found himself looking into the face of Jimmy Duryea.

But Jimmy did not come within reach. He only laughed, and turned hastily away.

"I thought so," he said: "I thought so;" and then he ran down the stairs, before Nick could make an effort to detain him.

CHAPTER VIII.

EXCITEMENT IN THE NIGHT.

Nick Carter was seated alone in the room that had been assigned to him.

It was rather more than an hour after midnight, and the guests of the house had retired to their respective rooms, and it so happened that Chick had been roomed in an entirely different part of the house from Nick.

The detective was uneasy in his mind. The atmosphere, somehow, seemed filled with portent of some sinister kind, and he could not define just the feeling that was upon him.

No further opportunity had been obtained for conversation with Nan Nightengale since that talk in the corner of the veranda; indeed, when Nick returned downstairs, after his inspection of Nan's rooms, and the encounter, at the door of them, with Jimmy, the party had divided itself into groups, some of which were playing cards, and others were indulging in music and the usual occupations of an evening of that sort.

But Nick was uneasy about Nan.

He realized that Jimmy could protect himself only by casting suspicion upon the songbird of the stage, and Nick knew that Jimmy would not hesitate to do that very thing—if it happened that the opportunity was offered him.

The detective's own impotency, so far as Jimmy was concerned, was apparent, and the reader must understand that, too.

Put yourself in his place for a moment.

Nick Carter could not arrest Ledger Dinwiddie and charge him with being Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea, without the ability to produce proofs of the assertion—and Jimmy was undoubtedly prepared to meet and to refute all such charges; was prepared to prove his claim to the name and reputation of Ledger Dinwiddie, and therefore to establish a sufficient alibi to whatever charge the detective might bring against him.

Nick Carter could not charge Ledger Dinwiddie with the theft of the jewels, because there was absolutely no evidence against him to support such a theory; there was only the statement of Nan, that she had seen him with them in his possession, in the library, during the night when they were stolen. That would be the unsupported word of one person against another—and Jimmy, as Ledger Dinwiddie, would not come off second best in such a scene. Nan could not, or at least would not, deny her past history, if it came to a show-down, and Jimmy would have to deny only that he was Jimmy, and to bring forward his proofs that he was, in reality, Dinwiddie.

Nick had had no opportunity to find out the exact location of Chick's room. Rooms had not been assigned to either of them until it was too late to do that.

"It is a remarkable circumstance," the detective told himself, in thought. "Here is a case where I know to a certainty the identity of the thief, and yet have no means of establishing the fact; a case where

I know, approximately, where the stolen property is concealed, and yet I dare not make an open search for them; a case where the criminal is in a position to look me in the eyes and defy me, simply because his own proofs are far better and more convincing than any that I can supply."

It was a remarkable circumstance.

The detective was cogitating upon these conditions when there came a low tapping against the panel of his door, and he sprang to his feet, snapped off the electric lights, and opened the door.

The hall outside was only dimly lighted, and Nick discovered, as he opened the door, the figure of a woman, clothed in a silken princess wrapper, and with a large veil, such as are worn in automobiles, thrown over her head, gliding rapidly toward the top of the stairs.

Nick followed swiftly, having not a doubt that the figure was Nan's, and that she was conducting him to one of the rooms on the parlor floor for the purposes of further conversation; but she was so far in advance of him that he could not see her distinctly, and he did not dare to call to her lest he should arouse other members of the household.

But the figure ahead of the detective did not approach the library door when it reached the parlor floor of the house; it passed the door, still keeping far in advance of Nick.

It hastened to the rear of the house, it opened a door that was there, which gave upon a back porch—and instantly, when that happened, the air was filled with the ringing of gongs, and the house itself—all of it, it seemed—was flooded with light.

Nick Carter realized at once, if too late, just what had happened.

The opening of that rear door had set off the burglar alarms in the house. Automatically it had switched on the lights in the house—and Nick understood that it was not Nan Nightengale he had followed, but Jimmy Duryea. Jimmy, in a woman's wrapper and with the veil over his head, so that in the dim light, and with the hasty glance through the partial darkness, Nick Carter would not be able to recognize him.

When that rear door opened, and the figure passed through it; when the lights flashed on, and the ringing of the alarm gongs began their din, Nick Carter leaped forward toward the open door; but only to trip and fall headlong in the hall before he had taken three more steps. He had tripped over a rope that had been stretched across the hallway, purposely to catch him.

As he fell, he heard the whir of an automobile engine, and the chug-chug of the machine as it started forward. As he sprang to his feet again, he not only knew that he was too late to overtake it, but he realized that he had fallen into a trap of some sort that had been carefully prepared by Jimmy Duryea.

Men think quickly in emergencies like that one; and Nick's first thought as he leaped to his feet was that the crux of the occasion remained inside the house, and that the apparent escape from it could be nothing more than a blind.

Of course the house was instantly in an uproar.

Doors opened and closed. Heads and shoulders were thrust over the balustrades. Voices called from above, demanding to know what was the matter. Men and women appeared from every conceivable quarter, in all stages of dress, and undress. Foremost among them, incased in a bathrobe which he was tying around his person, was Jimmy Duryea, otherwise Mr. Ledger Dinwiddie.

Behind him appeared the owner of the house, Theodore Remsen. He was followed by Mrs. Remsen, and by Lenore. Other guests, in various conditions, so far as clothing was concerned, appeared on the stairs, all demanding with one voice, almost, to know what had happened.

Nick Carter was the only person in that motley group who was fully clothed; but even as he turned to face those who were rushing toward him he noticed that there were two absentees.

Nan Nightengale and Chick were nowhere to be seen.

Because Nan was not there, Nick instantly felt undefined misgivings; because Chick was not present, Nick experienced a certain amount of assurance, for he knew that unless Chick were otherwise employed, he would have been among the first to put in an appearance.

It was Jimmy Duryea who gave expression to the first coherent thought, in the midst of that scene. He exclaimed:

"Really, Mr. Carter, if it is a part of the practice of your profession to scare us all to death, you might have given us some warning of it."

"There has been a burglar in the house!" shouted one of the women.

"Some one entered my room, and stole——"

"Oh dear, I never was so frightened in my life. I——"

"Did he get away?"

"It was a woman. I saw her. She ran out at that——"

"Where is Miss Nightengale? She isn't here. Perhaps she has been murdered in her sleep. Oh, it is horrible. I wish——"

And so on, and so on, ad libitum, ad infinitum. Half-finished sentences, all of them. Excitement everywhere, and then a general rush toward Nan Nightengale's rooms to find why she was not among them. Hysterical cries from the women; reassuring expressions from the men. Expressions of wonder at the din of the alarm, and at the sudden appearance of the lights—and then, the interior of Nan's suite of rooms.

Nan Nightengale was not there.

Everywhere within those rooms were evidences of disorder, but Nan Nightengale, herself, had disappeared.

More than that, it was discovered, presently, that many of her effects had disappeared with her. In one of the rooms, where the maid slept, the maid herself was discovered, deep in the stupor of a drug which was supposed to be chloroform.

One by one the house guests crowded into the parlor of Nan's suite. Some of them remained standing; some of the men perched themselves upon the arms of chairs, or upon the edges of tables; the women dropped upon chairs, or upon hassocks, and without exception they gazed at one another in utter consternation. Then, one by one, they began the recounting of the experiences of the night, which was still young, for it was not yet two o'clock.

Chick was not there, and, strangely enough, nobody seemed to have noticed his absence.

Without giving in detail all that was said at that informal meeting in Nan's boudoir, suffice it to say that there was not a woman present who was not willing to swear that she had seen or heard some person in her room; and in the midst of it all Lenore Remsen exclaimed:

"But why should a burglar have carried Nan away?"

Every one was silent; then the voice of Duryea:

"Little goose! She wasn't carried away. She ran away."

"But why? Why?"

"My dear, there could be only one reason. Carter was right behind her. She had to escape, or get caught, and she took the former course. I caught a glimpse of her as she ran through the rear doorway, and apparently jumped into a motor car. That must have been held there by an accomplice who was waiting to take away the spoils; the swag, I believe they call it? Eh? Carter? You're a detective. You ought to know."

Every eye in the room was turned upon Nick Carter then.

The situation was a clever one, adroitly arranged by Jimmy Duryea.

Nick met their looks calmly, and he replied quietly:

"I ran after a person, but it was not a woman. It was not Miss Nightengale. Of that, I am certain."

"Oh, come, Carter, what's the use of all that?" exclaimed Duryea. "I saw her, too. She wore some sort of a red wrapper, and an automobile veil, and——"

"And trousers under the wrapper, and a mustache under the veil," the detective interrupted him.

"Then where is Nan Nightengale?" demanded Theodore Remsen, stepping forward.

"She has been abducted," replied the detective coolly.

"Abducted? Nonsense! By whom?"

"By a scoundrel named Jimmy Duryea, known to the police as Bare-Faced Jimmy, all-around crook and expert cracksman. Just now the man is posing under another name, and is imposing upon certain confiding people, who believe all that he tells them. But, Mr. Remsen, the time has come to denounce him, and now——"

He stopped suddenly. A figure had appeared in the doorway, and all turned to follow Nick Carter's glance.

It was Nan Nightengale who stood there, facing them.

CHAPTER IX.

A PLOT MOST FOUL.

But it was Nan Nightengale, fully dressed as she had been when the members of this oddly assorted group had parted with her at retiring time, not arrayed in a red wrapper, and with an automobile veil thrown around her head, who faced them all.

She was strangely composed, too, although a trifle pale, as she entered the room and paused beside Nick Carter.

"Will some one please tell me what has happened?" she asked. The question was a general one, addressed to all alike, but she looked at the detective when she uttered it. And, she added, speaking directly to him this time: "I heard only the latter part of what you were saying. You said that the time had come to denounce some one. Who was it?"

She was outwardly calm and collected, though exceedingly pale. Nick realized that Nan was trying to

convey some sort of intelligence to him, with her eyes; but he could not read it, for truth to tell he was as greatly amazed as were the others by her sudden appearance among them.

Before he could reply, Duryea took the centre of the stage, so to speak. He thrust himself forward, into the limelight, if the expression may be used here, and with a smiling sneer on his handsome face, confronted Nan and Nick, both.

"I will tell you who it was, Miss Nightengale—and I call upon all who are here to let me finish what I have to say. If there are others here who have comments to make upon my statements, let them be made afterward."

He paused an instant. No one spoke. Nick Carter believed that it was best to let the man have his head at that moment. The detective had not seen through the plot, as yet, and it was necessary that he should see and know more about it before he continued with the denouncement he had intended to make. The things that Duryea intended to say might have some effect upon what Nick Carter would say in reply. Nick Carter waited; and he placed a restraining hand upon the arm of Nan, to bid her wait, also.

"What is it, Ledger? What have you to say about this?" asked Theodore Remsen, turning to him. "Do you mean to tell us that you know something about it?"

"I certainly do, Mr. Remsen," was the reply. "It was because I already knew something, and believed that we would yet catch the thief who stole Lenore's necklace and the other jewels, that I advised the repairs to the burglar alarm, which worked so perfectly to-night. I anticipated precisely this result."

"Go on; go on, Ledger. Come to the point. Don't beat about the bush!" exclaimed Lenore's father.

Jimmy deliberately turned his back upon Nan and Nick; he faced the other members of the company.

Pausing just long enough to give emphasis to what he would next say, he continued:

"I arrived here last Thursday, as you will remember. I made my first appearance before you at the dinner table. There was one guest who was in the house at that time, and who is present now, in this room, who did not appear at the dinner table that night. I did not then know that that guest was here.

"Many of you will remember that we passed a pleasant evening, and that the guest to whom I have referred did not come downstairs at all during it. Also, that we parted early and that I complained of being very tired with my long ride."

There were nods in the affirmative, around the room.

"Notwithstanding the fact that I was greatly fatigued," he continued, "I could not go to sleep. Some time during the middle of the night I left my bed, partly dressed myself, and descended to the library to obtain a book, intending to read myself to sleep; but, as I stepped into the library, I discovered that it was occupied, and that one of the persons who was there was the guest to whom I have referred, and who was not present at the dinner table.

"That guest, as you may have surmised, was a woman. She was not alone when I discovered her in the library. There was a man there, with her, and they were bending across the library tables, conversing in whispers, so low that I could not hear what was said. At the moment I did not suspect more than a clandestine meeting—and, inasmuch as I recognized the aforesaid guest as an old acquaintance, and knew a great deal about her, I was not surprised.

"I withdrew, as silently as I had gone there; and as I did so I heard just one remark that passed between the two. It was made by the man, to the woman, and he said: 'Very well, then. I will return here next Monday night.'"

Jimmy paused a moment to permit his words to take full effect.

"The day following, which was Friday," he continued, "I was duly presented to the woman in question. She did not remember me, or if she did, succeeded in concealing the fact from me, as well as from others. Some years have passed since I saw her, and at that time she was—well, she was associated with the notorious character whose name has been mentioned by Detective Carter to-night; with the notorious Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea, who is now dead, although Mr. Carter seems not to know that fact. I will say one word more about that man, although it pains me to do so. He was a burglar, a thief, everything that was bad and low, but he was my cousin, and his real name was the same as mine. Moreover, there was a personal resemblance between us. I can tell more about him when the proper time comes."

Again he came to a pause, and found this during it to glance exultingly around toward the detective. Then he continued:

"That day, Friday, it became known that certain jewels had been stolen from this house. I was instantly convinced that the woman had stolen them; also that she had taken them after the hour when she met the man in the library, because there had not been time, or opportunity, then. But I said nothing to anybody, until to-day, on the lawn, when, in a conversa-

tion that happened after the arrival of the detective, I ventured the opinion that the thief was a woman. But I determined to keep careful watch to-night.

"Now I am coming down to the explanation of present circumstances. I went to my room, determined to keep watch; but I half undressed, and I was sleepy. I fell asleep in my big chair. I was aroused from that sleep by the clanging of the burglar alarm, which I advised Mr. Remsen to have fixed, and which was done yesterday. I rushed into the hall, and down the stairs. I saw that same woman to whom I have referred passing rapidly through the lower hall, and directly behind her was Nick Carter, evidently in pursuit. But as I looked the detective tripped over something, and fell. The woman ran out at the rear door, which had been opened for her escape, and which act set off the alarm, thus enabling me to discover her.

"She sprang into a motor car. She wore a red wrapper and an automobile veil; but I recognized her, nevertheless. Nick Carter thinks it was a man in disguise, or he says he does. But I know it was a woman, and that woman stands—*there!*"

He wheeled and pointed an accusing finger at Nan Nightengale, who shrank away from him as from a loathsome thing.

"Deny it if you can Nan Nightengale, alias Nan Drummond, and alias many other names!" he cried out. "And you, Nick Carter, deny if you can that you knew this woman when she was Nan Drummond, a thief, and the wife of Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea, the crook."

It was a clever statement, cleverly devised, cleverly delivered.

It had all the effect that Jimmy anticipated.

The women in the room shrank away from Nan, and looked at her askance. It was evident that it did not occur to them to doubt Ledger Dinwiddie's statement.

"I will hear all of your remarkable story, Jimmy, before I reply to it," said the detective quietly. "That isn't all, is it?" He put out one hand and grasped Nan's arm, holding her firmly, to give her courage, for he did not want her to faint just then.

"No; it isn't all," said Jimmy, as coolly, in return. "There is more." He turned again toward the others. "Nick Carter knows the history of Nan Drummond, who calls herself Nan Nightengale, as well, or better than I do. He secured her a position on the stage, when she gave up thievery. He has been her sponsor ever since; and now I can see just how she has played upon his belief in her. When she went to the city, Saturday, and remained over Sunday with Mrs. Remsen, she must have looked him up. She must have told him—not that I was here, but that Jimmy Duryea, the burglar, was alive, and here under an assumed name. I have mentioned the fact that we were cousins, and resembled one another.

"The proof of my assumption is that when I was in the summerhouse alone with Nick Carter, during the shower of this afternoon, he actually charged me with being that same Bare-Faced Jimmy, here under disguise, and he demanded that I leave this place at once, and forever forego my hopes of making this beautiful girl, here, my wife. That I laughed at him goes without saying; that he did not mention what had passed between us to others is sufficient proof that he had made a mistake.

"Now, two things more: I do not know what part of this woman's plot it is to have returned here now, as she has done, fully dressed, after having made her escape with a wrapper on and a veil over her head, but she will probably tell you some cock-and-bull story in regard to it, in order to establish her innocence.

"The other thing is this: Those jewels that she stole, unless she has had opportunity to-night to pass them on to her confederates, are concealed somewhere in these rooms, without a doubt. That is all, my friends. Now, Nan Drummond, do you deny that you are Nan Drummond?"

"Don't reply to him, Nan," said Nick, speaking quickly.

"Do you dare, woman, to deny that you were once the wife of Bare-Faced Jimmy Duryea, the crook and burglar?" thundered the supposed Dinwiddie, still addressing Nan, who shrank away from him until she rested her body against Nick Carter.

"Don't answer," said Nick, again.

"Then you answer for her!" cried Jimmy, wheeling upon the detective, and playing his part to a finish. "You answer for her. You know all about her. You know that she was Nan Drummond. You know that she was once a thief. You know that she was everything else that was low and——"

Jimmy got no farther than that.

Somewhere, in the past, we have said that Nick Carter rarely let his temper act for him. But, like all men, he has a temper, and Jimmy Duryea had tried it sorely, in more ways than one, since Nick's arrival at The Birches.

It cannot be said that Nick exactly lost it at just

that moment, but it is certain that he permitted it to act just long enough to stop Jimmy's mouth, and to stop it effectually, too.

The detective stepped forward, loosening his grasp upon Nan's arm.

For just an instant he peered into the face of Jimmy Duryea, and then he acted.

His right fist shot forward, and it struck Jimmy squarely upon the jaw with a resounding slap that could have been heard in the adjoining rooms; and Jimmy went down like a clod of earth that is thrown from a shovel.

Some of the women there cried out. The men uttered various exclamations, and several of them rushed forward at once. There was a commotion outside, in the hall, and the local constable, with two or three men to assist him, rushed into the room. Evidently they had been brought there for the occasion by Jimmy Duryea.

But they halted at the aspect of Nick Carter, who stood facing them, directly over the figure of the prostrate man on the floor.

CHAPTER X.

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE.

"Stand back, all of you!" said Nick Carter, facing them all. "This man on the floor is my prisoner, and the one among you who attempts to interfere with me now will be sorry."

The constable and his assistants halted; they hesitated; and then Mr. Remsen pressed forward toward Nick.

"Mr. Carter; Mr. Carter," he expostulated, "you are going beyond your authority. You had no right to strike Mr. Dinwiddie. You——"

"One moment, Mr. Remsen. As an officer, I admit that I had not the right to strike him in the way I did; but as a man, I not only had every right, but it was my duty. He was defaming a good woman, and doing it in a shamefaced manner that long ago earned him the title he bears—for, in spite of all that he has said, this man is none other than that very Bare-Faced Jimmy he has been talking about."

"Oh, you brute! you brute!" cried Lenore, striving in vain to escape from her mother's detaining arms.

Nick merely glanced at her and murmured, "Poor girl!" then he went on, addressing the constable, who was still reluctant to perform what he considered to be his duty.

"Where did you come from?" Nick demanded of the constable.

"From the village," was the reply. "What is that to you, anyhow?"

"You'll find out what it is to me presently. Who asked you to come here?"

"Mr. Dinwiddie; that man there, whom you knocked down."

"And why did he ask you to come here?"

"He told me that there had been a jewel robbery, and that if I was on hand at this hour to-night, he would expose the thief, and that I would get the credit for the arrest."

"I thought so. He had it all nicely arranged, didn't he? When did he tell you all that, Mr. Constable?"

"He didn't tell me; he sent a letter by one of the grooms. But he had seen me yesterday, and had given me an inkling of what would happen. And, now stand aside. I want that woman whom he has exposed. I arrest her——"

"No you don't. You won't arrest anybody, Mr. Constable, unless you have a warrant, which I doubt; and if you have one, and serve it, you'll regret it as long as you live. You won't make any arrest, just now, unless I direct it, constable."

"Who says I won't? I——"

"I say so. I have the warrant, constable."

Duryea was beginning to move; he was recovering, and quick as a flash Nick Carter bent forward and snapped handcuffs on his wrists.

"Stop that!" cried Mr. Remsen. "You cannot arrest that man, here, Mr. Carter. He is my guest, and you are my guest. You are abusing my hospitality—and besides, just now you said that no arrests could be made without a warrant."

Nick Carter turned to Remsen. He spoke quietly, and in a kindly tone.

"Mr. Remsen," he said, "I have two duties to perform here to-night, and one of them, in particular, supersedes all the claims that might be made in the name of hospitality. I am doing you a very great service in saving your daughter from that man on the floor. He is as vile a scoundrel as ever went unhung. He is Bare-Faced Jimmy, the crook. He is the one who stole the jewels, and who has now tried to charge it upon a defenseless woman, after slandering her in a way that requires no answer. That is why I told Miss Nightengale not to speak."

"But the warrant! The warrant!"

"I have it here, Mr. Remsen. I secured it before I left the city. It is a bench warrant and is good any-

where in the State—and it directs me to arrest and to hold the person of James Duryea, alias Ledger Dinwiddie, alias Bare-Faced Jimmy. Here it is. Are you satisfied as to that?"

"Y-yes," reluctantly.

"He told you partly the truth, regarding that scene in the summerhouse, for he did have the face to defy me. I offered him his liberty, if he would leave the country, after returning the jewels he had stolen; but he dared to face me; to claim that he could prove that he is Ledger Dinwiddie, and not James Duryea."

"But where is the man who was in the library with Miss——"

"He is there, on the floor," replied Nick, interrupting. "The real circumstance is just the reverse from the manner in which he told it. It was Miss Nightengale who found him there. He had the jewels in his possession at the time. She saw them. That was why she asked me to come out here to-day—and even you will admit that I came here upon her invitation."

"Why doesn't Nick Carter produce the jewels, since he seems to know so much about them, Mr. Remsen?" said a drawling voice from the floor, and then they saw the fallen Ledger Dinwiddie draw himself to a sitting posture, and attempt to caress his bruised jaw with his manacled hands.

"I think I can do that, too, now that the time has come," said the detective, smiling. He turned to Mrs. Remsen, who had drawn nearer to Nan, and was now holding her by the hand.

"Madam," he said, "I wish to ask you a few questions about the interior arrangements of your house; that is, about some of its ornamentations. Will you indulge me?"

"Certainly, sir. What is it?"

"Before I ask the questions, I wish to make a statement for all of you—and if you interrupt me, Jimmy, before I have done, I'll put a gag in your mouth. Just for the present, I am running this show, as you may have noticed."

"Go ahead and run it, then. I'll do my talking after you have exploded all your detective theories."

"The statement is this, Mrs. Remsen. During that scene in the summerhouse with this scoundrel on the floor, I suspected that he had concealed the jewels somewhere in the rooms of Miss Nightengale, because he openly threatened to accuse her of the theft.

"This evening after dinner, I came to these rooms and examined them, hoping that I could find where he had concealed them; but I was unable to do that. I was not able to discover anything that suggested a possible hiding place, although I searched as thoroughly as I could do so, while I was here. When I went out, I encountered the real thief in the hall, waiting for me.

"He ran away before I was able to stop him. He descended the stairs ahead of me; but a very few minutes later, he was missing from the rooms downstairs, and I suspected that he had returned here. I concluded, in fact, that when I saw him in the hall, as I went out of these rooms, he had not followed me there, and did not suspect that I was there, but had gone there on some errand of his own.

"Now, madam, I have not been inside of these rooms since then, but nevertheless, in the short time that I have been here, I have discovered a certain change in the ornamentation of this particular room. I will ask you to look carefully about you, and to tell me if you perceive any change. Please do so. You, also, Nan."

Both women turned.

Everybody else in the room, including the nonplused constable and his three men, did the same.

Nan and Mrs. Remsen searched with care, using their eyes, but both of them presently shook their heads negatively.

"I see no change, Mr. Carter," said Mrs. Remsen.

"And you, Nan, do you observe none?" asked Nick.

"No," she replied. "What do you mean, Mr. Carter?"

He did not reply to her. He turned again to Mrs. Remsen.

"Madam," he said, "I have observed, since I have been a guest in your home, that you are evidently a collector of rare vases. Is that true?"

"Oh, yes; it has always been a hobby with me. But what——"

"In every room that I have entered, there are several, but in no case have I noticed two that are exactly alike. Will you tell me if you have two vases that are precisely alike, now in your possession?"

"Why, yes, now that you speak of it, there are two. But——"

"Pardon me, but will you tell me where those two vases are, now? Is one of them in this room? Don't squirm, Jimmy. We're getting warm, I know, but please remember that you are not to interrupt unless you want a gag in your mouth. Madam, is one of the vases, of which you have two alike, now in this room?"

"Yes." Mrs. Remsen pointed toward a vase that stood upon a bracket in one corner of the room. "That one, there."

"Precisely. That is what I thought. Now, will you tell us where the other one—the one that is precisely like this one—is located at the present moment, to the best of your knowledge?"

"Why, it is—or at least it should be—in the parlor of the red suite."

"And who occupies the so-called red suite of rooms?"

"Mr. Dinwiddie."

"Precisely. Now, I have not been inside the rooms occupied by Mr. Dinwiddie, as you call Jimmy, here, so I will have to ask you if those two vases are, in reality, precisely alike. Has not one of them been broken at some time, and mended?"

"Why, yes, as a matter of fact, one has. That is how I came to have two of them. A gentleman who was staying with us last fall broke one, but he found another like it and sent it to me after I had had the broken one mended."

"Madam, did it happen that the gentleman referred to was Mr. Dinwiddie?"

"Y-yes, sir. It was Mr. Dinwiddie."

"And the broken vase—the one that was mended, I mean—is it now in the red suite that has been occupied by Mr. Dinwiddie since last Thursday?"

"No," she replied, pleased that he had asked the first question that called for a negative reply. "I thought he deserved to have the good one in his room, so I put it there, and brought the one that had been broken to this room. There it is now."

"Thank you. Will you be so good as to examine it more closely, so that you can assure yourself that you have made no mistake in regard to it?"

Mrs. Remsen crossed the room to the vase. She raised it from the bracket, and held it in her hand for a moment. Then she exclaimed:

"Why, this is strange. This is the vase that was broken; and there is something inside of it that I never noticed before."

"The jewels, Mrs. Remsen, by any chance?"

"No. Something white. It looks like plaster of Paris. It——"

"Permit me to see for myself," said Nick, interrupting her, and he crossed the room with quick strides.

One glance into the vase was enough. He saw what had been done, on the instant.

He raised his eyes to Mrs. Remsen; he turned as if to speak to her; and then, as if it were done entirely by accident, he permitted the vase to fall crashing to the floor, where, weakened as it was by reason of a former fracture, it fell apart into three pieces. The diamond necklace that was Lenore Remsen's property was exposed to view.

CHAPTER XI.

THE REVELATIONS OF NAN.

"Found it, didn't you?" exclaimed Jimmy, with a return of his old assurance. He had managed to raise himself to a sitting posture, and to turn about so that he had a full and uninterrupted view of the exposure, when it happened. When nobody replied to him, but remained staring in more or less stupid wonder at what had taken place, he added: "Now, I wonder how in the world you knew it was there, Carter? Did Miss Nightengale tell you where she had hidden it?"

Nick made no reply—in words.

But he did take a hasty stride or two across the floor, pulling his handkerchief from his pocket as he did so, and the next instant Jimmy's jaws were forced apart, and the soft linen of the handkerchief was introduced between them.

"I told you that I would gag you if you interrupted," said the detective; and then, as Lenore attempted to rush forward toward her lover, the detective restrained her.

"Young lady," he said, "I honor you for your loyalty. You are ready to fight for, and to defend with your last breath, the man who has been your accepted sweetheart. It is hard for you to believe that he is not the man he has pretended to be."

"I won't believe it. I will never believe it!" she cried out. "You are no better than a brute to treat him so, Nick Carter. I hate you!"

Nick smiled down upon her, somewhat sadly.

"Some day you will thank me," he told her. "In the meantime, you must be patient. But, tell me. Do you also hate Miss Nightengale?"

"Hate Nan? No; I love her. But she has had nothing to do with this——" she stopped; and again the detective looked at her and smiled. Then, in a low tone, he spoke to her again.

"Do you believe that Nan stole your necklace?" he asked, so that the others, who were now examining it, could not hear.

"No; I don't."

"You would never believe that of your friend Nan, would you?"

"Indeed I would not."

"But somebody did steal the necklace. Now, who do you suppose it was?"

"I should sooner think that you did it than that he did," she retorted.

At that point they were interrupted by Mrs. Remsen, and as that lady spoke, all the others in the room turned and looked squarely at Nick Carter.

"Mr. Carter," she said, "I would like you to tell me, if you please, how you knew that the necklace was inside that vase?"

The question was a cold one. It was not reassuring. Nick saw that the spectators of the scene were now regarding him with suspicion.

"I did not know that it was there," he replied. "I only suspected it. As I stated before we discovered it, I was satisfied, by things that the thief said to me, that he had concealed the necklace in these rooms, or that he intended to do so. It was part of his plan."

"But——"

"One moment, please. When I came here to search for a hiding place for the jewels, the necklace had not yet been concealed here. I doubt if I would have discovered it, if it had been. But, as I left the room, I met him. He turned and ran away. I followed him quickly, but nevertheless I remembered, afterward—while I was seated in my own room to-night, in fact—that in leaving this room I saw on the mantel at the opposite side of the hall a vase that had not been there before. I saw it, and noticed it, only from force of habit in taking particular notice of the furnishings of every place where I happen to be.

"I could not have told you what vase it was. I could not have described it. I was merely conscious of the fact that such a thing was there—and that, later, when I came to the hallway out there particularly to look for that extra vase, to see if it was still in the place where I had seen it, it had disappeared.

"And so, madam, when we all entered this room a little while ago, I used my eyes in looking at vases. I saw that the vase that was just now broken was not in the position that it was when I supposed I had seen it last. It was not exposed to view in precisely the same way; and while I was talking, I changed my position somewhat, so that I could see behind it.

"It was then, madam, that I noticed the fact that this vase here had been broken, and mended; also that it was a long time since it had been mended. *I knew that the vase that was here when I came to this room earlier had not been broken and mended.*

"Do you see the deduction?

"There must have been two vases just alike, one of which had been broken and mended—and the one that had been broken and mended, had been, during that short time, exchanged for the perfect one.

"It was only necessary, then, to establish the point that the other vase had been kept in the room occupied by Jimmy Duryea, or Mr. Dinwiddie as you know him. Your answers to my questions established that fact.

"A moment later, when you said that there was something white inside the vase that had not been there before—something resembling plaster of Paris—the solution of what remained of the problem was apparent.

"Some years ago there was a great robbery in a jewelry store, in Paris. Afterward those jewels were discovered, imbedded in plaster of Paris, at the bottom of two huge vases that were ornaments in that store. That robbery was committed by the scapegrace younger son of a good family in England, whose people hushed the thing up and permitted him to go to South Africa on condition that he would never return. In South Africa, he changed his name to James Duryea; afterward he came to this country, and was known here as Bare-Faced Jimmy; still later, he wormed his way into your household under the name of Ledger Dinwiddie."

Mrs. Remsen came nearer to the detective.

"Mr. Carter," she said slowly, "I have heard many good things said of you. Are you sufficiently positive of all that you have said to swear to me that you know it to be true—all of it?"

"Yes, madam."

"Nan," Mrs. Remsen turned to her as she spoke, "will you explain now how it happened that you were outside the house, and returned here just when you did?"

"Yes," replied Nan. "I will explain. I hope you will believe me."

"I see no reason why I should not do so."

Nan hesitated for a moment. Then she turned so that she faced the assembled company.

"It is necessary that I explain to all of you," she said falteringly. "For a little while I have hoped that the necessity for it might be escaped; but now I see that it is essential."

"No, no, Nan, it is not essential. It need not be," said Nick Carter.

"Yes it is," she replied. "Let me have my way about it."

"Very well. Proceed."

Again Nan hesitated. Then, before she spoke, she half turned about and opened her arms toward Lenore. When Lenore hesitated, she said:

"Come here, dear. I want you near me when I speak, for you, above all others, must believe what I will tell you now. Come, dear."

Slowly Lenore moved forward. She seemed to sense the truth of what was coming, and a dark scowl crossed the face of Jimmy Duryea. Had it not been for the gag in his mouth, he doubtless would have interrupted them, then; but he could not speak, and nobody offered to relieve him of the impediment to speech.

"You must hear all of the truth, now, all of you," said Nan, then, with one arm tightly around the quivering form of Lenore Remsen; "and in order to explain the circumstance that Mrs. Remsen had asked about, it is necessary that I should tell other things, first.

"That man there"—she pointed an accusing finger at Jimmy—"told a great deal that was true, when he talked to you a little while ago, accusing me; but he did not tell all the truth about one part of it, and he told much less than the truth about another part of it.

"He is not an American. He never had any right whatever to the name of Dinwiddie, and how he possessed himself of it I do not know. He is an Englishman. His real name is James Howard Drummond. He is the younger son of a titled family in England. I knew him when I was a girl. I have known him all my life. As a girl I fell in love with him. As a girl and woman I still loved him, and finally I became his wife.

"Hush, Lenore. I am not his wife now. I secured a divorce from him when he was sent to prison eight years and more ago. Later, I married again. But I was his wife, and I am the Nan Drummond he referred to—his wife, then, when I bore that name.

"It was this way: My family became impoverished. I sought a position as governess, and went to South Africa with the family of an army officer. Later, Howard Drummond came there, also sent out by his family matters, as he informed me. My old love for him revived, and we were married.

"Then we came to this country. All the while he was a thief and a cracksman, and I did not know it—until later.

"After the discovery, my life seemed an utter wreck. I permitted myself to be led into crime by that man. I was afraid of him. He threatened my life if I did not obey him. Then he was caught and sent to prison, and I escaped him. And then Mr. Carter found me, held out hope to me, secured me a position on the stage, and so helped me back to an honorable life.

"I married a Mr. Smathers, an actor, and he has since died. Howard Drummond was supposed to be dead, also. Mr. Carter believed him dead; everybody who had known him thought the same. I did not know differently until last Thursday night, in the middle of the night, when I went to the library of this house to get a book to read, and found him there with Lenore's necklace and the other stolen jewels on the table before him.

"The recognition between us was mutual in an instant.

"He threatened me with a pistol. He even tried to make love to me again, believing that his old influence over me still existed. But he found that it did not.

"We were there, in the library, a long time. At the end of the scene, he promised me that he would return the stolen property, and that he would leave here for good and all. Formerly he possessed one virtue; he would keep his word; so I believed him then.

"But he did not restore the stolen property, and I threatened him with exposure.

"Then I went to New York with Mrs. Remsen. I encountered Mr. Carter by accident. I told him everything, because I knew that there, at least, was one man who knew the truth about me, and in whom I could trust.

"And now I come to what took me out of the house to-night, and so the explanation of my return here at an unexpected moment—for it was not expected that I would return—at the least, not until that scoundrel had won the victory he anticipated.

"Have any of you happened to notice the absence of one guest from this room? Mr. Carter, will you call your first assistant, Chick? He is outside waiting. His presence will help me to explain fully."

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAYING OF THE GHOST.

Nick Carter stepped to the doorway, and called aloud:

"Ho, Chick! Come here!"

A moment later there were steps along the lower hall, and Chick entered the room where now all were eagerly awaiting him.

"Thank you for waiting so patiently, Chick," said Nan; then she turned to the others again.

"Please remember what I have just told you about finding Howard Drummond, alias Bare-Faced Jimmy, and all the other names he has passed under, in the library, with the jewels in his possession. Remember that he had promised to restore those jewels, and that he did not keep his word, and that I induced Mr. Carter to come here to help me get them.

"When Mr. Carter appeared here, Jimmy, as he is called, tried to brazen it out, and Mr. Carter told me about it. I was of the opinion then that the villain would try to kill me, or Mr. Carter, or both of us, but Mr. Carter did not think so when we talked it over on the veranda last evening. Mr. Carter told me then that he was coming to my rooms to see if the thief had concealed the jewels here. The thief saw us talking together, and evidently decided that he must act quickly, if at all.

"Later in the evening he sought me, when Mr. Carter was not near. He managed to draw me aside, and although he detained me only a moment, he managed to say in effect that since his interview with the detective in the summerhouse he had decided to abandon his entire plan here, and take Nick Carter at his word; that he had decided to give up the jewels, and go.

"He agreed to return them to me, with a written confession that would state the case plainly, if I would meet him at half-past one o'clock to-night, in the summerhouse where he had talked with Mr. Carter. The condition was that I was not to inform Mr. Carter about it until I could put the jewels into his hands.

"I agreed to that, for I did not think that the man would dare to do me harm, now that Mr. Carter was here on the spot. But I did not promise not to inform Nick Carter's assistant—this gentleman here, who is Mr. Chickering Carter.

"I told Chick all about it, and asked his advice. He advised me to see the thing through to the end, and said that he would be near at hand if danger threatened.

"At half-past one o'clock to-night, I let myself out of the house silently. There were no burglar alarms that sounded then, showing that somebody must have turned off the power from them to permit me to go outside.

"I went to the summerhouse, and entered it. There was no one there, but after a moment two men sprang upon me from the darkness, I was seized, my hands were tied, and I was told that if I uttered a sound I would be killed. Then my feet were tied together and my own handkerchief was thrust into my mouth to gag me; and I was left there.

"But it was only for a moment.

"When those men stepped from the doorway of the summerhouse they were both knocked flat, handcuffs were put on them, and Chick came into the summerhouse and set me free. Then he made use of certain persuasive arguments which induced the men to talk and tell all they knew, with the result that we understood that they were to drive an automobile they had with them, to the rear door, and wait there until a woman in a red wrapper ran out of the house, when they were to start the car and go away about their business.

"I remained in the summerhouse, standing guard over the two handcuffed men, with a revolver, while Chick used the automobile as the men had been directed to use it. Just what the plan was, neither of us knew, but Chick decided to be on the spot when it happened.

"Now, you know when the woman, supposed to be me, but who was in reality that man there on the floor, disguised in a wrapper that he had taken from my room, rushed from the house, don't you? He dashed out at the door, and sprang into the car; Chick started the car ahead, according to the directions that the two captured men had received; but the disguised man in the tonneau leaped from the car when it started, seized a rope ladder that hung from one of the windows of the red suite, occupied by Ledger Dinwiddie, ran up it like a squirrel, and disappeared into the house. A moment later, it appears that he was here, on the stairs, tying the cord of a bath robe around him. That was the man of many names, who lies there, a prisoner now.

"Chick leaped from the car and came to me in the summerhouse. He tied up the two men so that they could not escape—and then we came here together.

"But we did not enter the house at once.

"Neither Chick nor I could understand just what the plot was, or exactly how the thief intended to have it work out.

"The instructions given to the men were to leave me in the summerhouse, bound and gagged, and the supposition is that it was part of Bare-Faced Jimmy's

plan to go there later, and release me, permitting me to return to the house, where, if I told the story of what had really happened, I would not be believed.

"For don't you see, he had made it appear that it was I who had escaped from the house, pursued by Nick Carter, who was tripped and thrown by a rope which Jimmy had stretched in the hallway for that purpose. How Mr. Carter saw him and gave chase, I do not——"

"He tapped at my door," said Nick. "That was probably a part of his plan. The necklace was to be discovered in your room, and he was foolish enough to suppose that even I would believe that you were more or less implicated."

"No, Mr. Carter," replied Nan, "he knew that you would never believe that; but he did hope to implicate me so deeply that you would be discredited. Perhaps he did not intend to free me, unless you compelled him to do so. I do not know.

"Well, when Chick and I returned to the house, you had all entered here. I came up the stairs alone, telling Chick that I would call him when he was needed. He thought that it was better that he should remain outside for a time.

"My unlooked-for return threw Jimmy entirely out of his reckoning. He had not expected that. All his plans threatened to go wrong at once. He was made desperate by the circumstance. He saw no other way than to make the bold charge he did against me.

"He knew that I would not deny that I had been Nan Drummond.

"He dared even to make use of the name of Bare-Faced Jimmy, claiming cousinship, in order to render his story the more plausible.

"He told near enough to the truth to give everything he said the appearance of reality. Once again he has earned the right to his title of barefaced, for such a barefaced scoundrel and falsifier, never lived or dared to live before."

Nan paused a moment, and then turned again to her friend Mrs. Remsen.

"That, my dear, is all of my story," she said. "Much of it you have heard before, for I thank Heaven that before I came into your house to live here as your friend, and to love the stepdaughter who is as dear to you as if she were your own, I told you all of that unhappy past history of mine. I did not come here under false pretenses."

"No, indeed you did not," cried Mrs. Remsen, putting her arms around Nan.

Lenore was quietly sobbing her heart out on Nan's shoulder, and now Nan, with one backward glance toward all who were in the room, led Lenore through a doorway into an adjoining room, and closed the door behind them.

"I have got just a word to say, right here," said Chick.

"Go ahead, Chick," said the detective. "We are all expecting to hear from you."

"Well, I didn't remain outside the house all the time things were happening in this room. I went upstairs, and visited the red suite—the rooms that were assigned to Mr. Ledger Dinwiddie."

He paused, stepped to the door, passed out, was gone a moment, and returned.

"I found these things in that room," he said. "They were under the bed, but I found them. There they are. Look at them."

He threw the heap to the floor, and all who were there saw the red wrapper, the big automobile veil, and the ladder of rope up which Jimmy had clambered in order to return to his own room in time to be on the scene.

"More than that," Chick continued, "I have got a full confession from one of the men I captured in the summerhouse, when they attacked Nan.

"Nick," he turned to his chief, "one of those men is the chap who used to live on that island where Jimmy Duryea was supposed to have died. His name is Griggs. Do you remember him?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, he can supply the truth that Jimmy Duryea did not die up there. He has already told it to me, and he will tell it again, whenever he is called upon to do so."

Again Chick turned about, facing the assembled guests again.

"There is just one more thing to tell you," he said. "I found a few other things while I was searching that red suite of rooms. I found these."

He thrust a hand into his pocket, and drew it forth filled with jewels.

"Here," he said, "is, I think, all the stolen property. If it is not there, the rest of it will doubtless be found in those rooms."

"Jimmy," said the detective, a little later, "do you want to make any confession in regard to the Dinwiddie game you have been playing?"

"When I do, I'll send for you," replied Jimmy. "Maybe you haven't got me quite so dead to rights as you think you have."

"Oh, yes, I have," replied the detective. "You'll get all that's coming to you, James, before I get through with you."

THE END.

Anybody would be deceived and fascinated by the crafty villain and his accomplished wife; who, in the next story, Nick Carter follows over a dangerous and crooked trail. To give you an idea of how slick a game these people can play, you are told that they fooled judge, jury, and spectators. Still Nick Carter was not to be beaten. You'll be much interested to read how Nick makes out in the difficult game this gentleman crook and his famous partner put up. It is a cracking good story. The title is "The Master Rogue's Alibi; or, Nick Carter Traces a Stolen Name." Out next week in No. 717. Don't miss it. You'll be sorry if you do.

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

NEW YORK, September 17, 1910.

TERMS TO NICK CARTER WEEKLY MAIL SUBSCRIBERS.

(*Postage Free.*)

Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

3 months	65c.	One year	$2.50
4 months	85c.	2 copies one year	4.00
6 months	$1.25	1 copy two years	4.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.

Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

Osmond G. Smith, George C. Smith, } *Proprietors.*

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

A CLEVER DISGUISE.

"Jorlette will be on board the seven-thirty mail train. Follow him to Liverpool. Will meet you there. Look sharp!

"CATHCART."

This was the wording of the telegram I received one wet, ugly night last December. I was sitting in my little snuggery back of my office, before a blazing grate with my feet in slippers, and my body in a warm dressing gown. I had a mug of hot punch and a cold mince pie on the table beside me, along with an uncut novel and a genuine Havana, with which I intended to regale myself presently. And, although I had a very strong anxiety to secure Jorlette, it must be confessed that I was altogether too comfortably situated to relish going out into the cold that dismally, dirty night.

This telegram was from my chief, who, I might as well say, was a detective; and I had followed that thankless and precarious business for several years. People considered me very successful in working up difficult cases, but I was never quite satisfied with myself. I wonder if any man ever is?

This same Jorlette had given us a great deal of trouble. We had never had so keenly cunning a spirit to cope with. Strategy was matched with strategy, diplomacy with diplomacy; and scores of times, when we were sure of him, he had slipped from under our fingers like a flea, and left us wondering how he managed it.

Perhaps it would be well to explain that Pierre Jorlette was a murderer upon whose head was set a price of two thousand pounds by the crown. A Frenchman and nobleman by birth, a gentleman by education, he had when very young married a beautiful English girl, with whom he passed two years of unalloyed happiness. At the end of that time some fearful shadow came between them—none knew of what nature—and the inhuman husband stabbed his wife to the heart! Her confidential maid witnessed the deed, and attempted to save the life of her mistress, but Jorlette fell upon her with savage ferocity and left the two corpses lying together side by side.

These are the facts as briefly as I can place them before you. Of course, there were many minor circumstances not worth recording, as they have little bearing upon the story I am writing. It seemed from this telegram that Jorlette was to be on the seven-thirty train. I wondered how Cathcart had got his information; but he had armies of spies constantly working for him, and probably some of them had made the discovery.

I had only to follow instructions.

For the hundredth time I took Jorlette's photograph from my pocketbook, and examined the features of the murderer. It was a singularly handsome face that I saw—clearly cut, with large, hazel eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, a mouth delicate and sensitive as a woman's, a high, rather narrow forehead, half hidden in clustering curls of auburn hair, a form rather spare, yet well knit, and a hand symmetrical and rounded as a woman's.

The picture would have answered splendidly for that of a sentimental, sonnet-making poet—but for a murderer it was a dead failure. Nevertheless, somewhere in the past, before crime had scathed him, Jorlette had sat for it.

I changed my slippers for boots, got myself inside my fur overcoat, stuffed a valise with brown paper and blacking brushes, that I might appear a respectable traveler, and, looking at my watch, found I had just time to reach the station. The train stopped ten minutes for refreshments, and taking the guard, who was an old friend of mine, sufficiently into my confidence, I was given an opportunity of looking through the carriages previous to the starting of the train.

It was a full train, but, singularly enough, there was not a red-headed man on board of it. Jorlette was red-headed, and, aside from that circumstance, he had a face which I flattered myself I could not readily mistake.

As I stood irresolute, and feeling very much as if I had been fooled, there came toward me from the dining room an individual, tall and spare, with a slouched hat, a white cravat, a huge piece of game pie in his hand—and this person had red hair! And dark eyes!

I watched him closely. There was a certain dogged, skulking look about him; he would not meet my eyes, and he walked off to the extreme end of the platform by himself, and remained there munching his pie until the last bell rang; and then he hurried on board with the air of one who felt that a great deal depended on his getting a seat.

I was convinced that he was my man, though he was not altogether like the photograph. Still, faces and photographs differ a great deal, since to the picture there is little expression and no color—and do not the characteristics of a face depend more on color and expression than a mere outline of feature?

He entered carriage No. 171, and, at a hint, the guard put me in the same one. There were three persons already there besides my pie-eating friend and myself. An elderly gentleman, who was reading the *Times* wrongside up, and nodding blandly over its fascinating columns; a pair of rural lovers, lounging on each other's shoulders, and discussing peppermint drops together; and presently we were reenforced by an old lady in a very prim bonnet with brown ribbons, and bearing luggage in the shape of a bird cage, a basket with a cat in it, an umbrella, and a very large carpet sack.

Jorlette had produced another section of pie and was demolishing it vigorously. Seemingly he enjoyed it. Well, I suppose even a murderer may enjoy eating pie.

Just as the train began to move, the door opened, and a young lady came hesitatingly forward. You know what helpless creatures women are on their feet in a bouncing, swaying railway car, and this young beauty was no exception. She tottered, and would have fallen, but I put up my arm and caught her, at the same time offering her the unoccupied seat by my side.

She blushed rosily, thanked me in the sweetest voice I had ever heard, and sank down on the cushions.

A lovelier face I had never seen. The skin was clear and fair; the mouth sweet, sensitive, and a little sad; the eyes dark and melting; and the beautiful dark-brown hair, which hung over her shoulders in the prevailing style, was as soft as floss silk, and rippled like the blossom of a meadow brook when it flows over a bed of pebbles.

But so lost was I in contemplating the charms of this

fair creature that I suddenly remembered I was not "looking sharp," as Cathcart had ordered me, and I turned to regard my unsuspecting Jorlette.

If a criminal, he was a very self-possessed one. He had finished his pie, and was picking his teeth with a quill, and furtively regarding his boots, which by a peculiar tightness and stiffness of look, I judged were new ones. Occasionally he felt of them, as if, perhaps, his corns were pinched, and once I was sure he muttered something like an oath as he rubbed his long white fingers over the locality of his great toe.

There was nothing to be done with him until we reached Liverpool, unless he attempted to leave the train, so I might as well cultivate the acquaintance of my pretty little seat-mate.

She was somewhat shy, but after a while I managed to overcome her reserve, and we chatted pleasantly like old friends.

She had not been much from home, and was a little timid about traveling alone. She started nervously every time the car gave a lurch, and I deemed it my duty to put my arm around the back of the seat to calm her fears.

She had such a horror of railway accidents, she said, and her Aunt Jane predicted, before she left home, that something dreadful was going to happen to her; and then she lifted her large, melting eyes to my face, and I drew the arm down from the seat and let it rest on her shoulder. Men are the natural protectors of women, you know.

We talked on various subjects. My sweet companion was very well-informed, and her language was simple and well-chosen. Before I was hardly aware of it, I had told her that I was a detective, and that I was making this journey expressly to help capture Jorlette—the notorious Jorlette.

She shuddered and drew a little nearer to me.

"Dear me!" said she nervously, "it must be dangerous business. This Jorlette, I have heard, is a desperate character. Pray, oh, do pray be careful!"

And she dropped her voice so near to a whisper, and threw so much expression into her beautiful eyes, that I could not resist tenderly pressing the white hand so near my own, and whispered, I am afraid, something that would look absurd on paper.

That was a very delightful trip to me, and I think it must have been not altogether unpleasant to the young lady, for her cheeks were red and her eyes bright as we approached the terminus. She was going to visit her sister, who lived two or three miles inland from Liverpool, so she had to leave me before my journey was ended.

The train only halted for a moment, but I managed to press a warm kiss on her lips, and to beg her to give me her address that I might call on her.

She smiled archly up into my face.

"I will drop you a line within a week, Mr. Dayton," she said sweetly. "Let me see—your first name is——"

"Alphonse, Number Three Hundred and Forty-one, T—— Street, Liverpool, for the next ten days. Good-by, darling!" and I kissed her again, and saw the door close behind her with a dull feeling of pain inside the left section of my waistcoat.

But I resolutely put my pretty unknown out of my mind, and devoted myself to looking sharp at Jorlette, who had evidently fallen asleep. Talk about the uneasiness of a guilty conscience, indeed!

At Liverpool Mr. Cathcart stepped into the car before any one had left it. He swept his eyes over the occupants, and a look of blank dismay settled on his face.

"Thunderation!" cried he, "is it possible you have let him skip!"

"He is there!" said I triumphantly, pointing to my red-headed fellow passenger.

"That!" said Cathcart, in a tone of ineffable contempt. "Alf, you're a fool. That man is the Rev. John Pennicut, rector of St. Thomas' Church, Cumberwell. How do you do, sir?" shaking hands with the pie eater.

As for me, I was looking around for a convenient knot hole to crawl into, but there seemed to be no such thing lying around loose.

Cathcart turned upon me fiercely.

"Where in the deuce is Jorlette?" he exclaimed savagely. "Did I not order you to look sharp?"

"Yonder reverend gentleman was the only one on the train in any wise answering Jorlette's description," said I doggedly.

The guard came up at that moment and substantiated my statement, and Cathcart was obliged to swallow his mortification with as good a grace as possible. His information relative to Jorlette's being a traveler by the 7.30 mail had come from one of his most reliable men, but there had been some mistake somewhere. We were not to pocket the thousand pounds reward in a hurry.

A week afterward I received a letter, written on pink paper, perfumed, and elegant generally. I transcribe it:

"My Dear Mr. Dayton: Hereby I fulfill my promise of dropping you a line within the week. I am flourishing, and hope you are also. My Aunt Jane's presentiment did not prove prophetic. I am on my way to America, where I expect to be elected to Congress with the rest of my stripe.

"Give my love to old Cathcart. You have no idea how funny it feels to have your lips pressed by a man's lips when you happen to be a man yourself. Sorry you are not to get the two thousand pounds, but self-preservation is the first law of nature. Faithfully yours,

"Pierre Jorlette."

Well, the secret was out!

My pretty girl was the infamous murderer himself, and Cathcart and I were done brown.

We kept the secret between us, and have not yet given over our search for Jorlette, but I greatly fear that the two thousand pounds will never fall into our hands.

DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

It was a clear, frosty morning, with a splendid promise of good skating in the evening, but Tom Burton failed to notice the prospect as he slowly wended his way toward the store of his employer.

Now, Tom Burton, although the son of a hard-working man, and obliged himself to fill a rather humble position in Mr. Martin's store, was, nevertheless, as light-hearted and cheerful as most boys of fourteen blessed with good health usually are. But just now poor Tom was in trouble, and not even the thought of the evening's possible pleasure or the remembrance of the nice pair of skates that hung so conspicuously in the kitchen at home could lift the weight that lay so heavy on Tom's usually light heart.

And only yesterday he had been such a merry, happy boy. Ah, but that was before his employer sent him on that errand to the post office with a letter in which five dollars were inclosed.

Mr. Martin liked Tom, and knew him to be a trustworthy boy, so he made no secret of the inclosure in the letter; and Tom was trustworthy, as far as honesty went; but then he was rather heedless, too, so when he met some boys of his acquaintance, he stopped a while among them. How it happened Tom could never tell, but when he reached the post office the letter was gone, and what to do he did not know.

Of course, Tom, in common with most schoolboys, had read that oft-repeated story of little George Washington and his hatchet; but just now he told himself sadly that a frank confession of his carelessness might possibly win his employer's leniency, but the lost money would surely be exacted, and Mr. Burton, senior, would feel the loss more, perhaps, than the elder Washington felt the loss of his favorite cherry

tree; and Tom's heart beat fast as he remembered his own total inability to meet the loss.

When Tom returned from his errand Mr. Martin had gone, so this morning all his trouble was before him, as he vainly tried to see a ray of hope.

He had gone about half the distance to the store when he was suddenly confronted by a boy about his own age, but whose dress and general appearance bespoke him of a very different walk in life; but the two boys were friends, nevertheless, and companions in many a boyish warfare.

It would be vain to depict the astonishment of Charley Livingstone as he viewed the dejected aspect of his friend.

"What's the matter, old fellow?" he exclaimed, as he laid a detaining hand on Tom's arm.

"Oh, nothing," said the latter; but the heavy sigh betrayed what his words denied, and Charley continued to question his friend until the latter poured all his trouble into Charley's willing ears.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" was Charley's next question.

"Oh, I don't know," sighed poor Tom. "Of course, I will tell Mr. Martin, and I suppose he will send me away."

"What, even if you pay him the money that was lost with the letter?"

"But suppose I can't pay the money," answered Tom bitterly, as he made a hasty movement to go on his way.

"Hold on, Tom," said Charley, and he laid a detaining hand on Tom's shoulder. "Let me give you the money. I have ten dollars of my own. Take half of it and pay Mr. Martin, and perhaps he will let you off this time."

Tom looked up, and a hot flush burned through his brown skin.

"Thanks, Charley, but I could not take your money, you know."

A bright thought struck Charley.

"Well, you can borrow it, you know, and I will take your note for the amount, with interest." And Charley swelled with all the importance of a great financier.

Of course that proposition put things on a different footing, and the business was soon arranged—at least, as well as it could be under such inconvenient circumstances.

Tom accepted the five dollars, promising to meet Charley in the evening with the note.

When the evening came Tom kept his word, and Charley buttoned his pocket over the note with the air, and more of the feeling, of the most celebrated money lender.

Thus the matter was settled, and the boys parted, and as Tom went home he tried to believe that he was over his trouble, but somehow a heavier trouble seemed to settle down on his heart as he thought of the debt he had incurred.

And the debt seemed to grow to mammoth proportions as the days went on, and no installment was forthcoming.

Now our Tom was a healthy boy. He had a wonderful appetite, and Mrs. Murphy, at the corner, kept a tempting assortment of delicacies that until now had absorbed all Tom's slender pocket money—yes, until now, when he had told himself he must save up to pay Charley that note.

So for some days he passed the stand with a careless indifference that was so badly assumed that good-natured Mrs. Murphy stopped him one day to assure him she was not the least afraid to trust such an honest boy, proving her words on the spot by presenting him with the reddest apple on the stand.

After that what could a boy do but patronize a kind woman? But alas! the debt remained; and Charley's manners were changed, too. Heretofore Tom had held supremacy in virtue of his superior skill in the several manly arts; but now, when they met, Charley was apt to assume a patronizing air which Tom could ill brook; but then he was so deep in Charley's debt, and he was so utterly unable to free himself, that he was fain to swallow his anger. And so the boys, from being warm friends, became, in fact, enemies, who scowled at each other when they met.

It was a bright sunny day in June. A goodly crowd were waiting to go on board of one of the steamers of the Boston line. Among the passengers that entered the boat was our friend Tom. Happy Tom! At last he was about to escape from his enemy. His uncle, a farmer in rather straitened circumstances, had sent for the boy, having no son of his own to assist on the farm, and Tom, who ere now had always refused to leave his home, had eagerly accepted the invitation, and all to get rid of the sight of his hated enemy.

Yes, Tom was happy. Charley and his note were left behind, and with his hands in his pockets our hero gave full vent to his gay spirits in a shrill whistle, but the very popular air was never finished, for Tom stopped suddenly in the middle of it as a well-dressed boy passed slowly in front of him.

It was Charley, and, of course, all Tom's pleasure was spoiled, and the old moody scowl resumed its place on his handsome, sun-browned face, while a proud, supercilious sneer curled Charley's lips as he passed slowly on.

After that meeting, you may be sure, the boys avoided each other, and it was not until a dreadful change menaced them both that they met again.

It was one of those unforeseen accidents for which it would seem nobody was to blame, but before the trip was half accomplished the boat took fire, and soon a large number of the passengers were struggling in the water for the life that the cruel flames would else deprive them of.

Tom Burton, although alone on the boat, managed to lower himself into the water and catch hold of a floating spar, and now his rare skill as a swimmer stood him in good stead in his great extremity.

The heat from the burning boat was becoming intolerable, and Tom hastened to put a safe distance between it and himself, when a cry of mortal agony caused him to pause and look up, to see his enemy, Charley, standing on the boat, the flames rapidly nearing him, and wringing from him that cry of despairing anguish.

In the pocket of Charley's jacket was the note that recorded Tom's indebtedness, but just now their relative positions were reversed. Poor Charley had been taught almost every accomplishment, but his lady mother had always kept him carefully from the water, she so feared its dangers for her son. But Tom could at least instruct his enemy.

"Jump over, Charley!" he shouted; "jump!"

But poor Charley could not swim, and it needed the nearer approach of the destroying flames to force him to that awful leap, and Tom's brown cheek turned ghastly pale, and his heart stood still, as for a moment he feared his enemy was gone forever, but just then the fair, boyish head was visible almost beside Tom, who immediately grasped hold of the almost senseless boy, and with his one disengaged arm held him until Charley was able to grasp the spar himself.

And now it was that all Tom's strength and skill were tried to the utmost, for Charley was wholly incapable of holding onto the support without the aid of his companion, who helped him bravely, and by word and hand encouraged his almost fainting comrade to keep up until rescue came.

Just as Tom's stout heart was sinking in a great burst of despair a boat reached them, and they were rescued.

Tom Burton did not go to work on his uncle's farm that summer. Mr. Livingstone, Charley's father, found something better for him to do. Charley's parents well knew that they never could repay their debt to the brave boy whose generous unselfishness had saved the life of their only son. But what they could, they did do. So Tom went to school, and eventually to West Point, for, as Mr. Livingstone very wisely remarked, it would be robbing the country to deprive such a brave boy of a military education.

Tom and Charley are middle-aged men now, and they are firm friends, and, though their pursuits in life are entirely different, they meet now and then, and often they enjoy a quiet laugh over that old far-away time when they were debtor and creditor.

LATEST ISSUES

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

The best detective stories on earth. Nick Carter's exploits are read the world over. **High art colored covers. Thirty-two big pages. Price, 5 cents.**

702—The Cloak of Guilt; or, Nick Carter in the Snare of His Double.
703—A Battle for a Million; or, Nick Carter's Master Device.
704—Written in Red; or, Nick Carter's Clever Subterfuge.
705—The Collodion Stain; or, Nick Carter Cracking a Hard Nut.
706—A Million-dollar Ransom; or, Nick Carter's Bathhouse Tragedy.
707—Rogues of the Air; or, Nick Carter's Helicopter Clue.
708—The Tightening Coil; or, Nick Carter Outpointing Master Rogues.
709—The Bolt from the Blue; or, Nick Carter and the Dream Stone.
710—The Stockbridge Affair; or, Nick Carter's Quick Detective Work.
711—A Secret from the Past; or, Nick Carter's Treasure-vault Case.
712—Playing the Last Hand; or, Nick Carter After a Bad Man.
713—A Slick Article; or, The Cleverest Rogue in New York.
714—The Taxicab Riddle; or, Nick Carter's Second Assistant.
715—The Knife Thrower; or, Nick Carter's Tragic Case.

DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY

The heroes of the stories published in this weekly are dear to the hearts of 60,000 boys. Diamond Dick is a splendid Western character. **High art colored covers. Thirty-two big pages. Price, 5 cents.**

715—Diamond Dick's Loyalty; or, The Mystery of Handsome Harry.
716—Diamond Dick's Australian Pard; or, The Cattle Queen of Double-S Ranch.
717—Diamond Dick's Triple Play; or, Baffling the Foes of Uncle Sam.
718—Diamond Dick's Mill Mystery; or, Handsome Harry's Bugaboo.
719—Diamond Dick's Marvelous Capture; or, The Hounding of Gil Curry.
720—Diamond Dick's Lightning Feat; or, Handsome Harry and the Golden Treasure.
721—Diamond Dick's Wonder Trail; or, The Fall of Red Radigan.
722—Diamond Dick's Dangerous Duty; or, The Million-dollar Mystery.
723—Diamond Dick's Fair Play; or, The Smuggler's Defeat.
724—Diamond Dick's Long Chance; or, A Robbery at Home.
725—Diamond Dick's Cleverness; or, The Mystery of a Piece of Brass.
726—Diamond Dick's Dead Line; or, A Plot for Wealth.

BRAVE AND BOLD WEEKLY

All kinds of stories that boys like. The biggest and best nickel's worth ever offered. **High art colored covers. Thirty-two big pages. Price, 5 cents.**

392—The Boy Motor King; or, Winning by Pluck and Daring. By Stanley R. Matthews.
393—Fooling the Enemy; or, The Siege of Boston Town. By John De Morgan.
394—Turning a Double Trick; or, The Courage of a Bowery Boy. By Malcolm Fawcett.
395—A Game for Millions; or, The Luck of a Young Reporter. By John L. Douglas.
396—Winning by Speed; or, A Motor Boy's Splendid Exploit. By Stanley R. Matthews.
397—The Green Mountain Boys; or, Ethan Allen's Heroism. By John De Morgan.
398—Wrecked in the Air; or, The Boy Motor King's Bond. By Stanley R. Matthews.
399—The Boy Who Got There; or, A Thousand Dollar Start. By John R. Conway.
400—The Little Corporal's Double; or, Changing the Map of Europe. By John De Morgan.
401—A Game Boy's Start; or, Making Good Against Big Odds. By John R. Conway.
402—Between Two Fires; or, A Hard Fight for Liberty. By John De Morgan.
403—A Dash for a Million; or, How a Fortune Was Found. By John L. Douglas.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 5 cents per copy, in money or postage stamps, by

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York

IF YOU WANT ANY BACK NUMBERS of our Weeklies and cannot procure them from your newsdealer, they can be obtained from this office direct. Fill out the following Order Blank and send it to us with the price of the Weeklies you want and we will send them to you by return mail. **POSTAGE STAMPS TAKEN THE SAME AS MONEY.**

.....*190*

STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

Dear Sirs: Enclosed please find.....cents for which send me:

TIP TOP WEEKLY, Nos.....
NICK CARTER WEEKLY, " .....
DIAMOND DICK WEEKLY, " .....
BUFFALO BILL STORIES, Nos.....
BRAVE AND BOLD WEEKLY, " .....

Name.....Street.....City.....State.....

The Nick Carter Weekly

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY **BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS**

When it comes to detective stories worth while, the NICK CARTER WEEKLY contains the only ones that can be considered. They are not overdrawn tales of bloodshed. They rather show the workings of one of the finest minds ever conceived by a writer.

The name of Nick Carter is familiar all over the world and the stories of his adventures are read eagerly by millions in twenty different languages. No other stories have withstood the severe test of time so well as those contained in the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. It proves conclusively that they are best.

We give herewith a list of all the back numbers in print. You can have your news-dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage-stamps.

385—The Secret Order of Associated Crooks.
433—The Pirate of the Sound.
434—The Cruise of the Shadow.
435—A Prince of Impostors.
437—Following a Blind Trail.
438—The Crime of the Potomac.
439—In the Shadow of Death.
442—A Clever Grab.
443—The Mystery of the Front Room
444—The Crime of Union Square.
445—A Millionaire Criminal.
446—The Broadway Cross.
447—The Princess Possess.
448—The Quexel Tragedy.
450—Missing: a Sack of Gold.
451—The Great Cathedral Mystery.
452—A Play for a Million.
453—The Pear-Shaped Diamonds.
455—Nick Carter's Human Weapon.
456—The Compact of Death.
457—The Rajah's Revenge.
458—A Tragedy of the Sea.
461—Nick Carter's Strange Power.
462—Nick Carter and the Marixburg Affair.
463—The Millionaire Cracksma
464—The Mystery Man.
465—Scylla the Sea Robber.
466—The Beautiful Pirate of Oyster Bay.
467—The Man from Nevada.
468—Maguey, the Mexican.
469—Pedro, the Dog Detective.
470—The Automobile Fiend.
471—Bellini, the Black Hand.
472—The Black Hand's Nemesis.
473—An Expert in Craft.
474—Nick Carter's Terrible Experience.
475—The Mystery of an Untold Crime.
476—Diana, the Arch-demon.
479—Abducted in Broad Day.
480—The Tong of the Tailless Dragon.
481—The Padlocked Mystery.
482—Dema, the Dangerous.
483—Nick Carter's Murder Problem.
484—A Battle Among the Clouds.
485—The Veiled Princess.
486—The Conquest of a Kingdom.
487—The House of Skeletons.
488—A Queen of Inferno.
489—Nick Carter's Foxy Adversary.
490—Three Times in Peril.
491—The Gold Lettered Dagger.
492—That Mysterious Affair.
493—A Dead Guardian of Millions.
494—The Mysterious Treasure Hunters.
495—The Klondike Bank Puzzle.
496—The "Bad Man" of Nome.
498—Following an Ocean Trail.
499—A Clue from the Clouds.
500—Praxatel, of the Ironarm.
502—Ismalla, the Chieftain.
503—Nick Carter's Earthquake Clue.
504—Nick Carter Among the Bad Men.
505—The Man of Many Faces.
506—A Letter from the Dead.
507—Bare-faced Jimmy, the Gentleman Crook.
509—The "Skiddoo" of the K. U. & T.
510—The Last of the Outlaws.
511—Nick Carter's Twin Mystery.
512—A Battle of Wits.
513—A Game of Five Millions.
514—Codman the Poisoner.
515—The Plot of the Poisoner.
516—The Mechanical Giant.
517—Doris, the Unknown.
518—A Dangerous Woman.
519—Madge Morley's Ghost.
520—An Automobile Mystery.
521—The Mysterious Stranger.
522—The White Arm of a Woman.
523—The Man in the Doorway.
524—The Plot of the Baron.
525—The Passenger on the Night Local.
526—A Double Mystery.
527—Clarice, the Countess.
530—An Amazonian Queen.
531—A Blackmailer's Paradise.
532—Gipsy Madge, the Blackmailer.
533—Facing an Unseen Terror.
534—Idayah, the Woman of Mystery.
535—The Making of a King.
536—The Empire of a Goddess.
537—Zanabay, h, the Terrible.
538—The Seven-headed Monster.
539—The Woman of the Mask.
540—The Masked Woman's Daring Plot.
541—Hobo Harry, the Beggar King.
542—Black Madge's Hobo Gang.
543—Black Madge's Vengeance.
544—A Tragedy of the Footlights.
545—The Maynard Woman's Double.
546—Three Against Fifteen.
547—A Mystery of Two Passengers.
548—A Dead Man at the Feast.
549—The House of Secrets.
550—The Lost Bank President.
551—Ralph Bolton's Double Plot.
552—The Dare-devil Crook.
553—A Mystery from the Klondyke.
554—Returned from the Grave.
555—The Mystery Man of 7-Up Ranch.
556—A Bad Man of Montana.
557—The Man from Arizona.
558—Kid Curry's Last Stand.
559—A Beautiful Anarchist.
560—The Nihilist's Second Move.
561—The Brotherhood of Free Russia
562—A White House Mystery.
563—The Great Spy System.
564—The Last of Mustushimi.
565—Secrets of a Haunted House.
566—A Mystery in India Ink.
567—The Plot of the Stantons.
568—The Criminal Trust.
569—The Syndicate of Crooks.
570—The Order of the Python.
571—Tried for His Life.
572—A Bargain With a Thief.
573—Peters, the Shrewd Crook.
574—The Mystery of the Empty Grave.
575—The Yellow Beryl.
576—The Dead Man on the Roof.
577—A Double-barreled Puzzle.
578—An Automobile Duel.
579—Jasper Ryan's Counter Move.
580—An International Conspiracy.
581—Plotters Against a Nation.
582—Mignon Duprez, the Female Spy.
583—A Mystery of High Society.
584—A Million Dollars Reward.
585—The Signal of Seven Shots.
586—The "Shadow."
587—A Dead Man's Secret.
588—A Victim of Magic.
589—A Plot Within a Palace.
590—The Countess Zeta's Defense.
591—The Princess' Last Effort.
592—The Two Lost Chittendens.
593—Miguel, the Avenger.
594—Eulalia, the Bandit Queen.
595—The Crystal Mystery.
596—A Battle of Wit and Skill.
597—Vanderdyken, the Millionaire.
598—Patsy's Vacation Problem.
599—The King's Prisoner.
600—A Woman to the Rescue.
601—Nick Carter in Japan.
602—Talika, the Geisha Girl.
603—By Order of the Emperor.
604—The Convict's Secret.
605—The Man in the Dark.
606—An Anarchist Plot.
607—The Mysterious Mr. Peters.
608—A Woman at Bay.
609—The Balloon Tragedy.
610—Nick Carter's Strangest Case.
611—The Stolen Treasure.
612—The Island of Fire.
613—The Senator's Plot.
614—The Madness of Morgan.
615—A Million-dollar Hold-up.
616—Nick Carter's Submarine Clue.
617—Under the Flag of Chance.
618—The Case Against Judge Bernard.
619—Down to the Grave.
620—The Fatal Javelin.
621—The Ghost of Nick Carter.
622—A Strange Coincidence.
623—Pauline—A Mystery.
624—A Woman of Plots.
625—A Millionaire Swindler.
626—The Money Schemers.
627—On the Trail of the Moon.
628—The House of Mystery.
629—The Disappearance of Monsieur Gereaux.
630—An Heiress to Millions.
631—The Man in the Biograph.
632—The Time-lock Puzzle.
633—The Moving Picture Mystery.
634—The Tiger-tamer.
635—A Strange Bargain.
636—The Haunted Circus.
637—The Secret of a Private Room.
638—A Mental Mystery.
639—The Sealed Envelope.
640—The Message in Blue.
641—A Dream of Empire.
642—The Detective's Disappearance
643—The Midnight Marauders.
644—The Child of the Jungle.
645—Nick Carter's Satanic Enemy.
646—Three Times Stolen.
647—The Great Diamond Syndicate
648—The House of the Yellow Door
649—The Triangle Clue.
650—The Hollingsworth [illegible]
651—The Affair of the [illegible] Bonds.
652—The Green Box Clue.
653—The Taxi-cab Mystery.
654—The Mystery of a Hotel
655—The Tragedy of the W[illegible]
656—The Black Hand.
657—The Black Hand Nemesis
658—A Masterly Trick.
659—A Dangerous Man.
660—Castor, the Poisoner.
661—The Castor Riddle.
662—A Tragedy of the Bowery
663—Four Scraps of Paper.
664—The Secret of the Mine
665—The Dead Man in the C[illegible]
666—Nick Carter's Master Stroke
667—The Air-shaft Spectre.
668—The Broken Latch.
669—Nick Carter's Sudden [illegible]
670—The Man with the [illegible] Thumb.
671—Feltman, the "Fence."
672—A Night with Nick Carter
673—In the Nick of Time.
674—The Dictator's Treasure
675—Pieces of Eight.
676—Behind the Mask.
677—The Green Patch.
678—The Drab Thread.
679—The Live-wire Clue.
680—The Vampires of the [illegible] ments.
681—The Policy King Baffled
682—The Madman's Gig.
683—A Life at Stake.
684—Trailing a Secret Thread
685—The Crimson Flash.
686—A Puzzle of Identities.
687—The Westervelt Option
688—The Vanishing Heiress.
689—The Birth of a Mystery
690—A Clue from the Past.
691—The Red Triangle.
692—Doctor Quartz Again.
693—The Famous Case of [illegible] Quartz.
694—The Chemical Clue.
695—The Prison Cipher.
696—A Pupil of Doctor Quartz
697—The Midnight Visitor.
698—The Master Crook's Move
699—The Man Who Vanished
700—The Garnet Gauntlet.
701—The Silver Hair Mystery
702—The Cloak of Guilt.
703—A Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.
705—The Collodion Stain.
706—A Million-Dollar Ransom
707—Rogues of the Air.
708—The Tightening Coil.
709—The Bolt from the Blue
710—The Stockbridge Affair
711—A Secret from the Past
712—Playing the Last Hand
713—A Slick Article.
714—The Taxicab Riddle.
715—The Knife Thrower.
716—The Ghost of Bare-faced
717—The Master Rogue's Ally
718—The Diplomatic Spy.
719—The Dead Letter.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS PER COPY

If you want any back numbers of our weeklies and cannot procure them from your news-dealer, they can be obtained from this office. Postage-stamps taken the same as money.

STREET & SMITH, PUBLISHERS, 79-89 SEVENTH AVE., NEW